



Annual Report 2024 / 2025



Photo: Gene Avallone for LeChase Construction June 2025

Mission

Graycliff Conservancy is dedicated to the preservation of the Frank Lloyd Wright-designed structures and grounds, along with the Ellen Biddle Shipman-designed gardens and landscape, that comprise Graycliff, the summer retreat of Isabelle & Darwin Martin of Buffalo, NY. The nonprofit organization strives to share the journey and all the stories of Graycliff, advancing the property as a publicly accessible historic site.

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(As of December 31, 2025)

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Photo: Alyssa Davis



Hard hat tour

Letter From Our Board President and Executive Director

Dear Friends of Graycliff,

The years 2024 and 2025 represent a pivotal chapter in Graycliff Conservancy's history—a period of transformation that will define the next generation of our organization. After years of planning and fundraising, we celebrated the culmination of our capital campaign (ultimately raising over \$6.5 million) and broke ground on our new Visitor Center in November 2024. While construction has necessarily shifted our operations, these transitional years have been driven by our unwavering commitment to Graycliff's future.

The completion of our capital campaign was a monumental achievement, reflecting the incredible faith our community has placed in our vision. The enormity of both the public and private investment in this project cannot be overstated. From government support and foundation grants to individual donors who gave at every level, this Visitor Center is truly a community effort. To every donor who believed in this project, who saw beyond the disruption to the possibilities ahead, who invested in Graycliff's future with such extraordinary generosity—we are profoundly grateful. You have not only made this project possible, you have affirmed the importance of preserving and sharing Frank Lloyd Wright's legacy for future generations. Your generosity is literally building the future of Graycliff. The new Visitor Center will allow us to welcome guests with the grace and professionalism our remarkable historic site deserves, to properly interpret our layered history, and to serve as a dynamic community partner in ways our former facilities simply could not support.

2024 marked our final fully operational season before construction began in earnest. We welcomed visitors through our standard tour offerings and had robust complementary programming and special events. When construction commenced, we knew 2025 would bring challenges. Tours continued, albeit much more modestly, as we navigated the realities of an active construction site. We deeply felt the absence of beloved programs like the Market at Graycliff—a reminder of how much these community gatherings have become woven into the fabric of Graycliff's identity.

To our visitors who showed patience and flexibility during construction, to our staff and volunteers who adapted with remarkable grace, and to our neighbors who have supported us through this period of change—we are profoundly grateful.

As we look ahead to 2026, we do so with tremendous excitement! The centennial anniversary of Frank Lloyd Wright's design for Graycliff will coincide with the opening of our new Visitor Center—a fitting celebration of past and future. This new facility will transform how we operate: enhanced spaces for education and interpretation, improved visitor amenities, and the capacity to expand programming in ways we've long envisioned. We will finally be able to properly showcase this exceptional place and tell all of Graycliff's stories with the depth and nuance they deserve.

The journey through 2024 and 2025 has required patience, but it has also strengthened our resolve and clarified our purpose. We are building not just a Visitor Center, but the foundation for Graycliff's next chapter—one that will allow us to inspire, educate, and welcome visitors for generations to come.

Thank you for standing with us through this transformative period. We cannot wait to welcome you to experience the fully realized vision of Graycliff when we reopen in 2026.

With gratitude and anticipation,



A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'C. A. Le Fevre'.

Charles A. Le Fevre,
President



A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Anna Kaplan'.

Anna Kaplan,
Executive Director

Construction Journey: Building Our Visitor Center

The new Visitor Center stands as the most significant capital investment in Graycliff Conservancy's history. This facility will revolutionize how we engage with visitors, tell Graycliff's many stories, and activate our role as a cultural destination. In summer 2024, following a thorough contractor selection process, we partnered with LeChase Construction to bring this vision to life. The ceremonial groundbreaking in November 2024 launched an intensive construction period that dominated 2025.

From November 2024 through 2025, the site hummed with activity as crews worked to expand the M&T Visitor Pavilion—a building that began as a gymnasium constructed by the Piarist Fathers (the property's second owners) and was rehabilitated over 20 years ago to serve as our visitor center. The construction involved selective demolition of portions of the existing structure, establishing foundations for the substantial addition, erecting the expanded building envelope, and methodically assembling the new spaces that will transform our operational capacity.

The construction timeline meant reduced programming and significant operational challenges in 2025, yet these temporary disruptions pale in comparison to what lies ahead. With completion targeted for 2026—marking exactly 100 years since Wright first conceived his design for the Martin family's summer estate—this building will unlock new possibilities for education, interpretation, and community connection.

The Graycliff Visitor Center project is a collaborative design by: HHL Architects (Architect-of-Record, Buffalo), SITU (Design Architect, Brooklyn), Bayer Landscape Architecture (Landscape Architect, Rochester), Tredo Engineers (Structural Engineer, Buffalo), M/E Engineers (MEP Engineer, Buffalo), CPL (Civil Engineer, Buffalo). The design was selected for its complementary aesthetic, the elegant functionality of the design, and the way it appropriately achieves an elegant balance with the Wright-designed historic houses.







Photo: Brett Deneve

2024 / 2025 Tours & Programmatic Offerings

2024 Core Tour Offerings:

Standard Tour

Extended Tour

Open House Tour

Home & Garden Tour

2025:

90-minute Standard Plus Tour

We welcomed a total of **11,253** guests on a guided tour or ticketed program. **45%** of our 2024 visitors came from New York State with **5,672** guests. Visitors traveled from across the country and around the world, as far as New Zealand and Singapore, representing 49 states and 15 countries across the globe. In 2025 **6,943** guests witnessed Graycliff's transformation firsthand, with visitors traveling from **47** states and **9** countries.



Graycliff's 2025 Tour Season was made possible through the generous support of:

The M&T Charitable Foundation, Ralph C. Wilson, Jr. Legacy Funds administered by the Community Foundation for Greater Buffalo, The Audrey and Lawrence Silverstein Foundation, Hodgson Russ LLP, and The Hooper Legacy Foundation

Guided Tour Program

2024 began on track to be another banner year for Graycliff. Through October, we welcomed 11,253 guests on guided tours and ticketed programs. Visitors traveled from as far as New Zealand and Singapore, with representation from 49 states and 15 countries across the globe.

In November 2024, we closed to tours as construction commenced, allowing for disruptive site work to begin immediately. Tours resumed in March 2025 with a streamlined offering: a single comprehensive 90-minute tour covering both floors of the main house. While 2025 visitation was understandably reduced due to construction constraints, we welcomed 6,943 guests who had the unique opportunity to witness Graycliff's transformation firsthand. Visitors came from 47 states and nine countries.



Photo: Brett Deneve

New York State remained Graycliff's strongest visitor base throughout this two-year period. In 2024, over half of our total visitation—5,672 guests—came from across New York State. Even during the construction-impacted 2025 season approximately 45% of our visitation was from New York State.



Photo: Avye Alexandres



Photo: Brett Deneve

Collaborative Programming

Theatre at Graycliff

We continued our collaboration with Fredonia's Play on Arts in 2024, expanding to two theatrical performances on our historic lakeside lawn. In June, audiences enjoyed Cabaret (Songs & Selections), followed by Shakespeare's Macbeth in September. Building on the success of the previous year's Romeo and Juliet, the partnership brought professional theater reimagined for Wright's unique lakefront setting.

Spring Strings

In April 2024, we hosted a trio of world-class musicians for an intimate sunset concert in the living room of the main house. Led by violist Joshua Lohner of the Buffalo Philharmonic Orchestra, the program featured classics from the string trio repertoire including Mozart and Schubert. This event marked a milestone as the first time the public was invited inside our restored interior specifically for a musical performance. The limited-capacity evening allowed 40 attendees to enjoy a self-guided tour of the first floor before the concert began, creating an immersive experience that blended Graycliff's architectural beauty with chamber music.

Graycliff Transformed by Jon Lehrer Dance Company

In August 2024, we hosted a remarkable site-specific performance by Jon Lehrer Dance Company. Following a week-long residency, the critically acclaimed NYC-based company choreographed a unique experience that animated the main house through movement and dance. Attendees were led throughout the property, during three intimate performances, to experience different vignettes inspired by Wright's architecture, the natural surroundings, and our rich history.



Photo: Brett Deneve



Photo: Lee Williams



Photo: Lee Williams

Penn Dixie Fossil Park and Nature Reserve

Wright Rocks! A Geology Tour of Graycliff continued in both 2024 and during construction in 2025 with a brand new element: guests are now led down to the beach and the base of the eponymous cliff to fossil hunt! These tours are jointly led by a Graycliff docent and a Penn Dixie staff member with an expertise in the geology of our site and make for a unique offering that supports both organizations.

Memory Cafes

In 2025, we partnered with the Martin House to launch “Memory Café” gatherings, offering a supportive and social environment for individuals with early to mid-stage memory loss and their caregivers. Together, we jointly organized, promoted, and supported six free café sessions—three held at Graycliff and three at the Martin House—where participants explored architecture and art themes through informal conversations and shared activities. Despite the challenges of active construction at Graycliff, we welcomed guests into



Photo: Lee Williams

the living room of the main house, providing respite and fostering connections in a comfortable setting. This collaboration demonstrated both organizations’ commitment to accessibility and community engagement, creating meaningful opportunities for caregivers and individuals with memory challenges to experience Wright’s designs in welcoming, supportive atmospheres.

◀ The Graycliff and Martin House Memory Café was made possible by Exhale and its funders: Ralph C. Wilson Jr., Foundation, the Community Foundation for Southeast Michigan, Blue Cross Blue Shield of Michigan, the Blue Cross Blue Shield of Michigan Foundation, the Michigan Health Endowment Fund, and Ann Arbor Area Community Foundation.



The Eclipse at Graycliff • April 8, 2024

On April 8, 2024, Graycliff was positioned directly on the path of totality for the solar eclipse—an alignment that won't occur again in Western New York for decades. We celebrated this once-in-a-lifetime celestial event with approximately 300 guests who gathered to experience the moment together. We offered special self-guided tours throughout the day, allowing visitors to explore the gardens, grounds, and first floor of the main house at their own pace while awaiting totality. Despite cloudy skies, the experience was magical as the landscape darkened and guests gathered on our historic lakefront property to witness the phenomenon. Eclipse glasses were provided with admission, and vendors were set up offering food and beverages, along with a mini-Market featuring local artisans. Witnessing this extraordinary celestial event from Graycliff's Wright-designed lakefront setting made an unforgettable day even more remarkable.



Fundraising Events

Summer Solstice Garden Party Recognized as “Best New Fundraiser” by Buffalo Spree in 2024!

The Summer Solstice Garden Party has become a beloved Graycliff tradition. It is believed that Wright, whose deep love for the natural world inspired so much of his architectural approach, intentionally designed the corner window in the “view room” of the main house to perfectly frame the setting sun around the longest day of the year. We celebrated this unique phenomenon in both 2024 and 2025, with the 2025 event demonstrating remarkable resilience as we hosted guests amid active construction. Both years featured live music, entertainment, a silent auction of fine art installed in the main house, and festive atmosphere on our historic lakefront grounds.

Celebrate Graycliff

Graycliff’s annual fundraising dinner continued in both 2024 and 2025, held each October at the historic Twentieth Century Club in downtown Buffalo—where Isabelle Martin was herself once a member. In 2024, the format evolved to a vibrant cocktail-style dinner event with live music, and we took the opportunity to celebrate the success of our Visitor Center capital campaign and honor those essential to the campaign’s success and the start of construction: HHL Architects, New York State Senator Sean Ryan, Erie County Executive Mark Poloncarz, and Catherine Schweitzer, Executive Director of The Baird Foundation. Both years brought together supporters, donors, and friends of Graycliff to celebrate our mission and this transformative moment in our organization’s history.

Wines by the Lake

In 2025, we launched Wines by the Lake, a new fundraising initiative that became one of the few programming efforts we could offer outside of our guided tour program during construction. This elegant wine tasting series, held inside the main house, featured four seasonal tastings led by Johnson Estate Winery with accompaniments by Dailys of East Aurora. Sponsored by Johnson Estate Winery, the series raised critical funds for Graycliff thanks to their generous support. Each event offered carefully curated wine selections paired with hors d’oeuvres, providing an approachable and sophisticated experience for wine enthusiasts of all levels.



Fundraising efforts were critical during 2024 and 2025, particularly as construction dramatically reduced our earned revenue in 2025. These events not only raised essential funds but also provided opportunities to celebrate the success of our Visitor Center capital campaign and the exciting transformation underway. We are grateful to everyone who celebrated these milestones with us and supported Graycliff during this pivotal period.



Photos: Brett Deneve



The 2024 Market at Graycliff was made possible thanks to support from:

M&T Bank (presenting sponsor), Buffalo Spree (media support), and additional support from the Audrey and Lawrence Silverstein Foundation, Hodgson Russ, the Hooper Legacy Foundation, The Baird Foundation, Highmark Blue Cross Blue Shield, Pour & Penchant, the Town of Evans, Nickel City Wax and Wane, StaffBuffalo/HRBuffalo, Wolf Agency, the Buffalo History Museum, and the Southtowns Regional Chamber of Commerce.

The Market at Graycliff (7th Annual!)

The seventh annual Market at Graycliff ran for eight Thursday summer evenings in July and August 2024. The Market continued to be a beloved free community gathering that drew thousands to the property. Vendors set up along the historic drive and on the tennis court, offering specialty food items, homemade baked goods, locally produced wine, flowers, quality handmade pottery, candles, and other products. The Market remained a producer-only market, supporting local vendors from the eight counties of Western New York.

The 2024 season featured themed evenings, live music each week, and free community yoga sponsored by Highmark Blue Cross Blue Shield. Market-goers also enjoyed the opportunity to explore the first floor of the main house through self-guided tours at a reduced rate.



The absence of the Market in 2025 due to construction was deeply felt by our community.

Visitors, vendors, and neighbors alike expressed how much they missed this beloved Southtowns summer tradition. The strong response to the Market's pause reinforced what we already knew—the Market at Graycliff has become a cherished part of the community's summer rhythm. We look forward to welcoming the Market back in 2026 with our new Visitor Center complete.



Graycliff Volunteers

Volunteer Commitment. The generous commitment from our dedicated volunteers is absolutely essential to keeping our organization running smoothly. It is our core group of nearly 150 volunteers that give their time to lead and assist our tours, care for our gardens and landscape, thoughtfully clean our restored historic interiors, support programmatic and fundraising events, and so much more. It is thanks to these enthusiastic and passionate individuals that we are able to further our mission

Graycliff Docents. Our docents create the educational and inspiring Graycliff experience for our visitors. They invest countless hours studying our history to best present all of Graycliff's stories. Our talented docents led 715 tours in 2024 and 608 tours in 2025.

Green Team. The Graycliff landscape needs continue to grow as we maintain the lush gardens restored according to Ellen Biddle Shipman and Frank Lloyd Wright's vision; we rely on volunteers to care for this landscape and keep it healthy and beautiful for our visitors. Our Green Team volunteers assist with essential activities such as weeding, deadheading, and trimming.

M&T Bank Volunteers. We are grateful for our continued relationship with M&T Bank, Graycliff Conservancy's first corporate sponsor. M&T staff dedicate several days each season to assist with grounds tasks that require many hands, such as laying compost and mulch and raking leaves. M&T's support at key points in the season has been invaluable.

New York State Office for People With Developmental Disabilities. Since 2021, we have welcomed volunteers and their caregivers from OPWDD on a weekly basis. In 2024, this group reliably and enthusiastically assisted with Graycliff's Green Team, contributing more than 125 volunteer hours in 2024. We paused this partnership in 2025 due to construction but look forward to resuming in 2026.

Our volunteers contributed a collective 4,571 of total hours in 2024 and 3,663 hours in 2025.



Donors

The **generosity of our supporters** is what allows us to further our mission. We are incredibly grateful for each and every gift. The following list acknowledges those who have contributed \$100 and more in a single gift. **Please note this list covers both 2024 and 2025 and the levels reflected are cumulative with donors who gave in both years starred.**

\$250,000+

New York State Council on the Arts **
Walter E. Schmid Family Foundation **

\$100,000 - \$199,999

Erie County **
M&T Charitable Foundation **

\$50,000 - \$99,999

Community Foundation for Greater Buffalo **
The East Hill Foundation
The Margaret L. Wendt Foundation

\$25,000 - \$49,999

Audrey and Lawrence Silverstein Foundation **
The Baird Foundation **
The D-B Trust at the Community Foundation
for Greater Buffalo

\$15,000 - \$24,999

Anonymous **
Arts Services Inc. (ASI)

\$10,000 - \$14,999

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\$500 - \$999

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Tributes

In Memory of Edward Bran
In Memory of John Kociela
In Memory of Rita Schillaci
In Memory of Cliff Whitman
In Memory of Jerry Workman
In Memory of Jean Zadvorney
In Honor of Anna Kaplan
In Honor of Victor Shanchuck
In Honor of Cynthia Silverstein
& Margie Stehlik
In Honor of M. Dianne Sippel

In 2025, an anonymous donor stepped forward to fund essential masonry restoration of the lantana planter on the main house, contributing \$19,595 to complete this important preservation project.



Wooden Block Recognition Campaign

In 2025, we established the Wooden Block Recognition Campaign to honor donors to the Visitor Center project while generating critical operating support. These commemorative blocks, crafted from trees necessarily felled during construction, pay tribute to Friedrich Froebel's educational blocks that profoundly influenced young Frank Lloyd Wright's design principles. The following supporters contributed to this effort in 2025, and their names will be recognized in perpetuity inside the new Visitor Center.

Stuart Barrie
James M. Beardsley & Ellen M. Gibson
Sandra Brant
Bruce & Carol Bronnenkant
Rebecca Brooks Hardy
Gloria Cannon
Marlene & Todd Capron
Diane Chrisman
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Jacqueline Simon
Gail & Bruce Skeldon
Marilyn & John Sozanski
Karen & Frederick Spaulding
Cheryl St George-Calleri & John Calleri
Nancy & Tom Syron
Grace Szakacs

Donors to our Capital Campaign for a Visitor Center

Our capital campaign for the new Visitor Center reached a tremendous milestone in 2024 with the completion of fundraising and the start of construction. The successful campaign raised over \$6.5 million through public investment, foundation support, and individual generosity, demonstrating the deep commitment our community holds for Graycliff's future. This transformative project—designed to provide enhanced functionality, expanded visitor amenities, and a thoughtfully designed space—was made possible through the extraordinary support of government partners, foundations, and individual donors who believed in Graycliff's vision. The new Visitor Center will allow us to properly interpret our layered history, serve as a dynamic community partner, and appropriately showcase this exceptional place. To every donor who contributed to this campaign, we extend our deepest gratitude. Your investment is building the foundation for the next chapter of Graycliff's story.

The Baird Foundation

John & Julie Baldo

Eve Berry

Rev. Joseph Blatz

Phillip & Judith Brothman

Sarah Carney

Ann & Colin Casey

Diane Chrisman

Edward & Monica Chuhna

Community Foundation for
Greater Buffalo

The D-B Trust at the Community
Foundation for Greater Buffalo

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& Bernhard Huber

Rev. Dr. Whitworth Ferguson

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Rex & Catherine McKeon

Jeff & Brenda Mendola

David & Susan Mikulski

Marianne Myles

New York Power Authority

New York State Council on the
Arts (NYSCA)

Nick & Emily Notarius

Holly & Andy Nowak

Office of New York State

Senator Sean M. Ryan

R. Mark Pierzynski
& Giuseppe Erba

Jerome & Michelle Puma

Kathleen Reilly

The Richard W. Rupp Foundation

Wayne & Elizabeth Robinson

Marion Schmidt

Michael & Sara Schraft

Diane & Fred Schrenk

Catherine Schweitzer

John & Marilyn Sozanski

Phyllis Spears & Alan Kelley

Sandra & Michael Starks

Douglas Swift

Turner Construction Company

Carol Wahlenmayer

Walter E. Schmid Family
Foundation

Linda & Doug Ward



Rendering by HHL Architects, SITU Studio, and Bayer Landscape Architecture

Statement of Financial Position

GRAYCLIFF CONSERVANCY, INC.

STATEMENT OF FINANCIAL POSITION

DECEMBER 31, 2025

(With Comparative Totals for 2024)

	<u>2025</u>	<u>2024</u>
ASSETS		
CURRENT ASSETS:		
Cash and cash equivalents	\$ 243,984	\$ 918,462
Contributions and pledges receivable	10,000	59,000
Current portion of grants receivable	3,132,638	40,000
Prepaid expenses	-	2,500
Inventory	5,613	19,960
Total current assets	3,392,235	1,039,922
GRANTS RECEIVABLE, net	-	213,017
INVESTMENTS	189,583	161,376
	189,583	374,393
FIXED ASSETS:		
Land	277,000	277,000
Buildings	394,092	394,092
Improvements and restoration	8,228,062	8,202,055
Furniture and equipment	235,844	235,844
Building restoration in progress	4,571,819	712,339
	13,706,817	9,821,330
Less: accumulated depreciation	(7,157,721)	(6,580,687)
Total fixed assets	6,549,096	3,240,643
Total assets	\$ 10,130,914	\$ 4,654,958
LIABILITIES AND NET ASSETS		
CURRENT LIABILITIES:		
Accounts payable and accrued liabilities	\$ 712,670	\$ 67,959
Line of credit	1,478,286	15,000
Current portion of long-term debt	28,888	24,050
Total current liabilities	2,219,844	107,009
LONG-TERM DEBT, net	186,715	215,866
Total liabilities	2,406,559	322,875
NET ASSETS:		
Without donor restrictions	6,134,050	2,950,878
With donor restrictions	1,590,305	1,381,205
Total net assets	7,724,355	4,332,083
Total liabilities and net assets	\$ 10,130,914	\$ 4,654,958

Statement of Activities and Changes in Net Assets

GRAYCLIFF CONSERVANCY, INC.

STATEMENT OF ACTIVITIES AND CHANGES IN NET ASSETS FOR THE YEAR ENDED DECEMBER 31, 2025 (With Comparative Totals for 2024)

	Without Donor Restrictions	With Donor Restrictions	Total	
			2025	2024
REVENUE:				
Contributions	\$ 212,479	\$ 336,017	\$ 548,496	\$ 419,377
Contributions of nonfinancial assets - fixed assets	137,116	-	137,116	-
Contributions of nonfinancial assets - special events	18,912	-	18,912	59,272
Government grants	3,798,673	-	3,798,673	354,616
Special events	113,799	-	113,799	150,477
Tour income	225,969	-	225,969	266,402
Retail sales, net of cost of sales of \$24,546 and \$70,665 in 2025 and 2024, respectively	19,725	-	19,725	64,592
Membership dues	38,864	-	38,864	37,422
Rental income	3,250	-	3,250	2,750
Investment income	36,009	-	36,009	87,731
Gain on sale of fixed assets	-	-	-	1,000
Net assets released from restrictions	126,917	(126,917)	-	-
Total revenue	4,731,713	209,100	4,940,813	1,443,639
EXPENSES:				
Program services	516,904	-	516,904	558,493
Management in general	279,560	-	279,560	192,773
Fundraising	175,042	-	175,042	114,146
Total expenses - before depreciation	971,506	-	971,506	865,412
CHANGE IN NET ASSETS - before depreciation	3,760,207	209,100	3,969,307	578,227
DEPRECIATION EXPENSE	(577,035)	-	(577,035)	(578,138)
CHANGE IN NET ASSETS	3,183,172	209,100	3,392,272	89
NET ASSETS - beginning of year	2,950,878	1,381,205	4,332,083	4,331,994
NET ASSETS - end of year	\$ 6,134,050	\$ 1,590,305	\$ 7,724,355	\$ 4,332,083

Beam Signing

During summer 2025, we invited supporters, Board members, volunteers, and staff to participate in a ceremonial beam signing as construction progressed on the new Visitor Center. Participants signed their names on a structural beam that would soon be installed in the building, literally becoming part of Graycliff's future. This meaningful tradition allowed our community to leave a lasting mark on the project and symbolized the collective effort that made the Visitor Center possible.





Photo: Chris Kalisiak



Martin Family Members and Guests Visit Graycliff



Photo: Matthew Digati

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and **6,500** likes



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5,800 followers



2024 & 2025
Travelers' Choice
Tripadvisor recognition