Bayou Bend Collection and Gardens

Not far from Houston's fast-paced, metal and concrete urban hub is an oasis of beauty and tranquility, a secret sanctuary where history grows in the gardens and lives in the halls. Welcome to Bayou Bend Collection and Gardens, a grand estate which houses a compendium of significant American furnishings, decorative arts, silver, ceramics, and paintings spanning several centuries. The estate, now part of the Houston Museum of Fine Arts, sits among the picturesque homes of the historic River Oaks neighborhood.

The Bayou Bend Collection and Gardens was originally the family estate of Ima Hogg (1882–1975), a well-known Houston philanthropist.

During the time she lived there, she carefully selected and collected masterpieces of American furnishings, art, and decor representative of the styles and craftsmanship of the Colonial era through the late 19th century. She built this extensive collection knowing that she was curating a museum she would eventually donate to the city of Houston. Each of the 28 rooms and galleries in the home is a time capsule, where furniture, portraits, china, pottery, and textiles represent a particular period of American history.

Beyond the doors of the mansion are its eight formal gardens that were designed to extend the living and entertaining areas of the house outdoors. Like the rooms of the house, each garden has a different theme, paying tribute to a goddess or “muse,” or simply highlighting each garden’s natural assets. Some are intricately landscaped with classic symmetry, while others follow winding wooded paths. Some honor the trees and natural features while others showcase statues and fountains. The 14 acres of Bayou Bend's organically-maintained gardens are nationally recognized as among the most significant in the South.

Open year-round, Bayou Bend is one of Houston's hidden gems, a must-see for lovers of gardens, antiques, history, art, and architecture.