

Harbor Shores, MI

An oasis for coastal culture and community in southwest Michigan.



The Inn and Marina at Harbor Shores

Berrien County, Michigan has a deep history as a resort town. Passengers aboard Lake Michigan steamships first frequented the area in the early 1900s, followed by tourists traveling via automobile and train to visit the county's lush mix of natural resources. Visitors will find dunes, forests and sandy beaches with crystal blue water. Berrien County, known as "the fruit belt," is a center of fruit production, with apple and pear orchards, berry farms, grape vineyards and local wineries, such as Tabor Hill.

Harbor Shores is nestled into Michigan's southwestern coast at the connecting point of Berrien County's twin cities, St. Joseph and Benton Harbor. The community is just 90 miles away from Chicago but virtually a world away. The contemporary manifestation of Harbor Shores evolved out of a Victorian desire for restorative coastal vistas and a leisure resort culture. The result is a multi-tiered leisure lifestyle and entertainment community centered on the spirit of water.

According to Jeff Noel, Harbor Shores president, "It is here at the intersection of the St. Joseph and Paw Paw Rivers that our overarching vision has been to redevelop and reclaim the acreage that abuts to the water, and to integrate this into a community connected by the water."

Stay at the Inn

The Inn at Harbor Shores, which opened in 2014, is a 92-room, full-service resort and business hotel with a spa and waterside dining. The Inn offers indoor and outdoor swimming pools and heated whirlpools, a fitness center, first-class meeting facilities, a curated art gallery displaying Michigan artists and 14 condominium residences.

Just outside the Inn lies the Marina at Harbor Shores — a 54-slip, deep-water, floating dock marina on the St. Joseph River, providing boaters direct access to Lake Michigan. The marina is a Freedom Boat Club location, offering a carefree and affordable alternative to boat ownership.

"Future development of the marina — in conjunction with the waterfront improvement program offered by U.S. Fish and Wildlife — is in the planning stage," says Ronald Judson Smith, principal associate broker at Harbor Village Realty, LLC. "The plan includes completion of the St. Joseph River side of the marina's 300-foot pier, dredging along the pier and approximately 700 feet of already installed sheet pile seawall. When complete, this expansion will offer approximately 1,000 feet of broadside transient dockage for guest boats and yachts."

The Inn's interior highlights the hues of the surrounding natural environment, accentuated by the talents of local Michigan artisans, craftsmen and furniture makers. The Inn at Harbor Shores recently added: Rise & Vine, a

bar with morning espresso and evening flights of local Michigan wines; dawn to dusk room service; state-of-the-art Wi-Fi; and a shuttle service to transport guests downtown St. Joseph for shopping and dining, or to the burgeoning Benton Harbor Arts District.

"Now in our third year, we have really found our stride," says Inn Manager Ed Vandenaek. "Our focus has always been on taking care of our guests and becoming a cozy full-service resort hotel with all the comforts of home."

Harbor Shores community

Harbor Shores' community philosophy is: Advocating fellowship around the lake; offering entertainment, recreation, golf and boating; and serving as a lifestyle destination with opportunities for home ownership.

A centerpiece of the greater 530-acre Harbor Shores community is the Jack Nicklaus Signature Design public golf course — the site of Senior PGA Championships. The Harbor Shores Golf Club restaurant, The Grill at Harbor Shores, has been voted one of the "Best New Restaurants" in Benton Harbor. Twelve miles of walking trails along the Paw Paw River surround the golf course.

The Inn's architect, Michelle Rumsa, found early inspiration in the history of resorts built along the coast of southwestern Lake Michigan, especially Plank's Tavern (built in 1887); this would become the namesake for the Inn's restaurant, Plank's Tavern on the Water, featuring simple comfort food with a modern flair. The restaurant offers approachable modern specialties, such as caramelized goat cheese with balsamic fig compote, house-made short rib, smoked gouda ravioli, and Otto's organic chicken with chive mashed potatoes and seasonal vegetables.

For those seeking to become residents of Harbor Shores, there are seven different residential communities to choose from: 14 luxury condominiums on the seventh and eighth floors of the Inn; Hideaway Cottages; Trailside Cottages; Fairways Signature Golf Homes; Champions Village Golf Villas; the Enclave neighborhood; and the brand-new Harbor Village community. This new 11-acre neighborhood, adjacent to the marina, will offer a variety of housing options — from single-family homes to townhouses — and will be available to residents this summer. The entire Harbor Shores community is interconnected by a pedestrian bridge and a network of bike paths and sidewalks.

Millicent Huminsky of the Southwest Michigan Tourist Council invites visitors to walk along this piece of Lake Michigan's shoreline to experience why people have traveled to St. Joe's coastline for nearly three centuries. "White sands move beneath your bare feet," she says. "Sailboats splash a rainbow of color across the white-capped water. The fiery sunsets have a permanent memory." ★



(From top to bottom) The Jack Nicklaus Signature Design Golf Course; Downtown St. Joseph; The Spa at Harbor Shores; A newlywed couple walks down the docks at the Marina at Harbor Shores.

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