

featured destination



Cruising Lake Michigan

By Kathy Barth

“Going Up North for the weekend” was part of the culture where I grew up in central Lower Michigan. The auto industry mostly closed down about 3:00 on Friday when I-75 out of Flint and Detroit along with US 27 out of Lansing (my home town) became one long stream of northbound escapees. Small wonder when you live in the Great Lakes State.

Even before I started boating, I had a tradition of spending a weekend each year in Harbor Springs and Petoskey. It is simply the best place I know of to run away to. The fall color spectacular is breathtaking. In winter, Boyne Highlands offers some of the finest skiing in the North within a few hours drive of Detroit.

By boat, it is even better. Flanking the Little Traverse Bay, the two towns are rich in history and provide fabulous dining, shopping, and cruising amenities.



Harbor Springs

Offering year round entertainment

Founded by the Jesuits, Harbor Springs was once called L'Arbre Croche, (Crooked Tree). In 1847, L'Arbre Croche had the largest concentration of Indians in the states. The village was incorporated as Harbor Springs in 1880.

Harbor Springs' fresh air and natural beauty also attracted many well-known wealthy families in the Midwest who built Victorian summer homes around the bay in private communities such as Wequetonsing and Harbor Point. Families like the Gambles (Proctor & Gamble), Fords, Upjohns, and Offields (Wrigleys Gum) became a part of the area's vibrant summer community. Legend has it that Al Capone owned and frequented a home on Beach Road (look for the one at the end of the road with the stream running through the yard...). Many of these grand homes (quaintly called “cottages”) are still owned and occupied by the current generation of the founding families.

With its own small airport, winter ski areas and golf courses, Harbor Springs offers year round entertainment.

Where to Dock

Harbor Springs Municipal Marina (tel: 231.526.5355)
46 Transient Slips.

Where to Eat

Juilleret's Family Restaurant: 2 words: Planked Whitefish. This delicacy consists of Lake Whitefish spread on a seasoned hardwood plank and broiled in butter. The filets are crispy around the edges; potatoes are piped around the edges to keep the juices corralled. No credit cards or alcohol, but an old time soda fountain, marble topped counter and all. Save room for the Thundercloud sundae.

Stafford's Pier Restaurant: One of the arrival traditions is to walk out to the end of the city pier and enjoy the view. Talk about true waterfront dining, this gem is built on original pilings over the harbor. Enjoy The Pointer Room for more formal dining with a view that can't be beat or the more casual Chart Room downstairs. Try the Cherry-Berry Bibb Salad or anything

with Morel Mushrooms; an elusive treat hunted in the Michigan woods. www.staffords.com/pier-restaurant-5

The New York Restaurant: As the New York Hotel, this eclectic spot was established in 1904 across from the old downtown railroad depot. The New York's wine list is second to none, with around 300 vintages offered. Honored with the Wine Spectator's Award of Excellence “for having one of the most outstanding restaurant wine lists in the world” for 5 consecutive years. They have a darn fine burger, too. Bloody Marys are served with a pickled Brussels sprout and a beer shot chaser. www.thenewyork.com

What to Do

Shopping: Antiques, boutiques, jewelry and fine art are all featured along Harbor Springs Main Street, a shady pleasant place to browse.

Cornichons Market and Deli: Wonderful meats, cheeses and specialty foods from locals with fresh soups, breads, and sandwiches made daily. Those familiar with Ann Arbor can reminisce with a loaf of Zingerman's Deli's famous bread.

Golf: Golfers can take advantage of one of the finest facilities in the country. Boyne Highlands boasts the Donald Ross Memorial course and the Heather designed by Robert Trent Jones, named #55 in the Top 100 Courses you can Play by Golf Magazine. For information and tee times call 1-800-GO-BOYNE.

Petoskey

Fabulous dining, shopping, and cruising amenities

The picturesque town of Petoskey, located just across Little Traverse Bay from Harbor Springs, was officially granted a charter in 1879. Lumbering was a mainstay for Petoskey during the late 1800's; its Lake Michigan access was the key to developing logging in the community. In fact, lumber from the region was instrumental in helping rebuild Chicago after the Great Fire.

Passenger trains and steamships played a major role in the growth of Petoskey. From 1873 to 1960, several major rail lines brought visitors from cities like Indianapolis, Cincinnati and Detroit to the clean, quiet, resort atmosphere. The passenger depot for the Chicago and West Michigan line today houses the Little Traverse History Museum.

Steamships like the North American and South American carried passengers from ports throughout the Great Lakes to Petoskey and Harbor Springs trip from either Chicago or Milwaukee. Once in the area, visitors got around via stagecoach, ferry, local rail lines, carriage, bicycle and on foot.

Petoskey's Historic Gaslight District will take you back to that era. Its shopping offers everything from Kilwin's Chocolates (It's the original Kilwin's that was once a bakery owned by Don and Katy Kilwin), to J. C. Penney to Cold Nose Productions, a clothing, furniture, accessories and gift gallery featuring one of a kind pieces made by local artists. Symon's General Store built in 1879 is a treat to browse.



Where to Dock

Petoskey Marina (tel: 231.347.6691) 50 Transient Slips.

Where to Eat

The Perry Hotel: Built in 1899, The Perry Hotel offers the total experience of that era plus modern conveniences. Perched high on the bluff overlooking Little Traverse Bay, you can choose your dining style from the elegant H. O. Rose Dining Room, the casual Noggin Room Pub Bar & Grill with year round live music, or the Rose Garden Veranda, a quiet outside setting. Try the Smoked Duck and Morel Quesadilla for openers, and then the Walleye, with prosciutto, caramelized onions and red pepper in roasted garlic butter.

Stafford's Bay View Inn: Built in 1886, this hilltop beauty is the place to go for Sunday Brunch. The buffet has it all and has it perfected. Check out the Reed Avenue Porch for relaxing with a quiet cocktail. Part of the historic Bay View residential district.

Grand Traverse Pie Company: As the name implies, go for pie. Some of the finest in Cherry country, and here everybody tries to make that list. Take home frozen and bake, too.

Grocery

Oleson's: A real grocery store with an excellent bakery.

Symon's General Store: As mentioned earlier, old time shopping with gourmet treats tucked in as a bonus.

For those who are hooked on Grand Traverse Bay and Traverse City, I strongly suggest checking out the smaller cousin to the North. As wonderful as the area is, you just can't lose. [ml](#)