

# Stafford's Pier Restaurant in Harbor Springs marks its 75th anniversary

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Posted: Saturday, May 1, 2010 · Updated: Friday, April 30, 2010, 2:27 pm  
Nancy Payne/Saturday staff writer · 6 comments



Carol Parker (left) and Jody Ewbank of the Pier Restaurant look at vintage photographs of the Pier. Photo: Nancy Payne/Saturday

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Stafford's Pier Restaurant in Harbor Springs marks its 75th anniversary this year.

In celebration of that venerable milestone, the Pointer Room, the restaurant's signature dining room, is undergoing a complete renovation.

"We're excited about the renovation. Many of our longtime patrons who have had a sneak peek are thrilled with the changes we're making to the room ... and that's important — it's exactly what we were hoping for," said Pier Restaurant general manager Jody Ewbanks.

According to Vee Mossburg of Cottage Company Interiors, the company leading the renovation, "We are honored to be chosen to make over a space that means so much to so many in Northern Michigan. I believe patrons will enjoy the Pointer's crisp, new design intent, one that pays homage to its roots yet introduces a younger, artsy aesthetic. Overall, it will read like a fine lakeside cottage and exude a casually-elegant emotion."

The extensive renovation work will have been completed in five weeks, start to finish.

"The Pointer Room will reopen for brunch on May 9, Mother's Day — one of the busiest days of the year. We will literally raise the curtain at the entrance way to the room. It will be a dramatic moment in the history of the Pier and one we're looking forward to," offered Carol Parker, dining room manager.

She added that in addition to the renovation and reopening of the room, the restaurant will offer new menu items as well as old favorites.

"Chef Laura Vaughan always stresses particular attention toward fresh product. As much as possible, local produce is used to create a unique, fresh and extremely appetizing menu. The hallmark for all of these decades has been quality," Parker said.

The history of the Pier dates back to 1935, when the original site opened its doors as a bar shortly after the repeal of prohibition. The original structure, owned by a Mr. Booth, consisted only of the current Chart Room. It was sold to Al Gerhart in approximately 1945 and became known as Al's Pier. The building was enlarged, but service continued during construction.

The property changed hands several times over the next two decades and culminated in the purchase by Stafford's Hospitality by 1970.

"The Pointer Room was added shortly before that time as a result of local residents lamenting the fact that there wasn't fine dining available year-around in the area," noted Ewbank.

"The addition of the Pointer Room was a project of extreme detail and planning

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requiring the Army Corps of Engineers. The request had been made to extend the property out over the water and to build a new dining room with spectacular views of the harbor. Seventy-five foot pilings were planted in the water in preparation for the Pointer Room and ultimately resulted in a dining room literally over the water. It's the area's only true water's edge dining room," Ewbank added.

Stafford's Pier Restaurant is located at 102 Bay St., Harbor Springs.

For reservations, call (231) 526-6201. More information is available on the website,

[www.staffords.com/pier](http://www.staffords.com/pier).

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"In Harbor Springs I myself stay away from the locals or anyone that thinks their a local because they own a condo on Bay st, that they use from May to Sept. The Pier restaurant seemed pretty decent to me. "



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**uncle paul** posted at Monday, May 3, 7:16 pm · [Link](#)

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"Yeah, some people are just negative Nancy's. Anyone who thinks the Pier is a "not for locals" joint must have a real inferiority complex. Plus, a \$10.95 cheese burger at Bar Harbor isn't exactly "way cheaper" than the \$6 burger they offer in the chart room. "



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**alwaysATnever** posted at Monday, May 3, 10:40 am · [Link](#)

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"No doubt, Congrats to the Pier.

Arizer, get a life. "



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"As a "local," I congratulate the Pier. Best planked whitefish in the north.

Do forgive Arizer, whose personal failures lead him/her to degrade and insult the hard work and accomplishments of others. "



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**js2golfer** posted at Monday, May 3, 8:39 am · [Link](#)

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"Arizer...you are not very bright, are you? How about just congratulating a business being around for that long and supporting the community with jobs. In particular in an economy like this when we are running at almost twenty percent unemployment in the offseason. Keep collecting those unemployment checks and making lame comments on this website Arizer."



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**Arizer** posted at Sunday, May 2, 4:06 pm · [Link](#)

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"another NOT FOR LOCALS restaurant in Harbor, good thing Bar Harbor has better food and way cheaper prices."

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