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CONSTRUCTION/REAL ESTATE/DEVELOPMENT

New owners plan upgrades at Bowers Harbor Inn

By Al Parker

Photo by John Russell



Jon Carlson and Greg Lobdell will bring "new energy" to the Inn and The Bowery.

OLD MISSION PENINSULA - For generations, discriminating diners who enjoy elegance along with their entrees have made the journey north to Bowers Harbor Inn.

Two long-time peninsula residents promise to keep that tradition alive.

Old Mission Historic Development, owned by Traverse City natives Jon Carlson and Greg Lobdell, has purchased Bowers Harbor Inn and The Bowery, as well as the 11-acre property on which both restaurants are situated. The Inn was previously owned and operated by Schelde Enterprises.

Built in the 1880s as a summer retreat for Chicago lumber baron J.W. Stickney, Bowers Harbor Inn sits along West Grand Traverse Bay. Schelde Enterprises purchased the Inn in 1974 and it soon became the flagship restaurant of Schelde Enterprises, gaining a reputation for fine dining and outstanding wines.

"This property is a jewel of Old Mission and a place Greg and I came to know growing up on the Peninsula," said Carlson. "The Lobdell and Carlson families have dined at Bowers throughout the years and have always been impressed with Schelde's care and operational excellence ...our plan for the site involves the powerful combination of the finest dining, modern amenities, and historical integrity."

Carlson and Lobdell and have been best friends since they attended kindergarten together at Old Mission Peninsula School. They now redevelop historic properties throughout Michi-

gan and have pledged to invest significant capital in renovation of the Inn and The Bowery.

Immediate improvements include updates to the dining rooms and upstairs restrooms. "We'll be refurbishing the booths, tables, chairs, floors, ceiling, and draperies," explained Carlson.

Both restaurants will continue to be open as usual during the spring and summer seasons. At the end of the season, major renovations and a potential expansion will begin, with completion scheduled within 18 months.

In addition to its reputation for fine dining, the Inn is also famous for its resident ghost—original owner Genevieve Stickney—who is well known for her haunting activities in the stately building.

"We've had our encounters with Genevieve and she's extremely excited and pleased about our plans," said Carlson. "She, Greg, and I are good friends and we look forward to being with her for years to come."

While the Inn is noted for its dining splendor, the adjacent Bowery has forged its own reputation for serving great food in a cozy and casual atmosphere.

"This is a fantastic milestone for the Inn and for Old Mission Peninsula," noted Schelde Enterprises Chairman Howard Schelde. "I have had a love affair with this historic site since the day I saw it in 1974, and I am very pleased that it will be preserved for future patrons and the community." BN

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