



Mission Point Resort (courtesy photo).

## Mission Point, Mackinac Island's other hotel

*By Dennis Lennox*

Anyone who grew up in Michigan knows Mackinac Island to be a special place.

Located in the Straits of Mackinac, where Lake Huron and Lake Michigan meet and the impressive Mackinac Bridge has connected the state's Upper and Lower peninsulas since 1957, the island has been on the map since the days of empire, when French explorers, traders and missionaries first charted these waters.

The British soon followed, though their settlement of Mackinac Island may have never happened had the threat of an American attack against the largely indefensible old French fort on the mainland during the second half of the American Revolution not forced the construction of Fort Mackinac atop the island's limestone bluffs.



The historic streets of Mackinac Island (photo by Dennis Lennox).

Despite the war formally ending in 1783, the British occupied these parts of the newly independent United States until 1796. In fact, American control wasn't cemented until after the War of 1812—the British occupied the island for most of the largely forgotten conflict—though by the end of the 19th century tourists came to dominate island life.

It was during Mackinac Island's transition from a strategic military fortification to an attractive destination for wealthy tourists from Detroit, Chicago and Cleveland that the iconic Grand Hotel was established.

While the Grand Hotel arguably defines Mackinac Island as much as Fort Mackinac or the island's unique, car-free way of life, it isn't the only big hotel welcoming visitors.

Located on the grounds of a former private college on the island's sunrise side is Mission Point Resort, which is both upscale and relaxed.

You're more likely to see gentlemen wearing madras shorts and a polo shirt with a popped collar than the jacket and necktie required at the Grand Hotel. Plus, rates (rooms start at \$145) are considerably more affordable, making it ideal for families.

Owner Dennert Ware, who, together with his wife Suzanne, bought the hotel in 2014, has embarked upon a multi-year renovation after previous owners allowed the hotel to become tired.



The view from the ramparts of Fort Mackinac (photo by [Dennis Lennox](#)).

Rooms are being redone, a new spa is planned, the Adirondack-style hotel lobby was refreshed and creative new packages featuring memorable experiences are being offered to guests.

One such experience, created by managing director Bradley McCallum, allows guests to watch the sunrise over Lake Huron while enjoying a breakfast picnic of locally caught whitefish benedict and homemade croissants with Michigan peach jam. (Just imagine how popular that picture will be on Instagram and Facebook!)

## **If you go**

The annual Lilac Festival, which this year is planned for June 3–12, and the Independence Day holiday may be the most popular times to visit, but Mackinac Island is best experienced during shoulder season from late May through the second week of June and again in September after Labor Day.

If peak season is the only time you can visit then consider a Tuesday or Wednesday, when day trip visitors are fewer in number.

## **How to get there**

By car from Detroit it takes a little over four hours to reach Mackinaw City, the main departure point for ferries from the mainland.

Summer airfares on Delta Airlines from Chicago's Midway International Airport to nearby Pellston Regional Airport via a connection in Detroit are as low as \$377, according to a search on Google Flights. New York airfares were about the same prices as Chicago, according to the same search.

**Flights to Chippewa County International Airport, located outside Sault Ste. Marie, also on Delta via Detroit, were about \$321 through September, according to Google Flights.**