

*Best of Readers' Choice Winner
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The Belvedere Inn Saugatuck

One year, hundreds of breakfasts and dozens of Chateaubriands for Two later, Peter Ta and Shaun Glynn still love owning and operating this bed & breakfast at an otherworldly 1913 mansion three minutes from downtown Saugatuck. In a way, they love taking care of the Belvedere and its guests more than they thought they would.

Shaun Glynn, who 20 years ago trained in Europe as a chef, certainly had an idea about quality personal service from his background in the hospitality business, though he went corporate early in his career. (Shaun came to the Midwest as an employee of Hilton Hotels and became a restaurant director of operations in Chicago, where it got to the point that he was opening a new place every year.) But for Peter, a trader at the Chicago Mercantile Exchange used to running his world from a computer keyboard, there was another kind of adjustment. "We have never worked harder, 18-20 hours a day," says Peter, "but it doesn't feel like work."

"And it's not just because we work for ourselves," Shaun adds. "It's because everybody, our guests, are so interesting and so different." But there are other reasons this just worked: Shaun knows about food, managing kitchens, paying attention to detail and "the nature of the beast," as he says in his slight brogue. Pete is strong in marketing and advertising, he knows about growing a business, professional goals and administration; he's a demon on the computer, complementary strengths.

Peter and Shaun were living in Bucktown in Chicago when they started to think seriously about opening an inn in Michigan. It took nine months for them to obtain the Belvedere, which was not even available when they began their search. Shaun explains that, when it came right down to it, the decision was easy. "We had this beautiful Henredon table, and we realized that the table fit perfectly in the foyer of the Belvedere," Shaun explains. And there it is. Perfect. In front of the French doors onto an expansive veranda that opens onto a mini-Versailles landscape and a scenic pond. An exquisite spot to reflect, relax or just talk with the proprietors who are genuinely interested in every guest.

Peter and Shaun say their goal was to make the Belvedere feel like a small European hotel, and that mission has been accomplished. The inn is as carefully wrought and as splendid as a small hotel on the Left Bank in Paris or on a canal in Venice. ("Belvedere" is Italian for "beautiful view.") Ten rooms are available, including a grand second floor suite with a two-person marble-encrusted Jacuzzi and slate shower, fireplace, wet bar and private balcony overlooking the terrace. Complete food, conference and special-event facilities are offered.

The Belvedere Inn, located at 3656-63 rd St, is just off I-196 in Saugatuck. 877-858-5777, 269-857-5777;
www.thebelvedereinn.com.