



# NEWS

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## GRAND HOTEL DEBUTS MULTI-MILLION-DOLLAR RENOVATIONS IN PARTNERSHIP WITH DOROTHY DRAPER & CO. FOR 139<sup>th</sup> SEASON

*The design transformations represent the latest phase of an ongoing, five-year restoration project spanning all facets of the historic hotel and its guest experience*

**MACKINAC ISLAND, MICH. (May 16, 2025)** – On the heels of the 139<sup>th</sup> season opening on May 2, [Grand Hotel](#) announces today the completion of significant renovations to signature spaces on the hotel's main floor, including the Parlor, iconic Main Dining Room, and Audubon Bar, which debuts as a new concept called Baroque this season. The transformation has been spearheaded by [Dorothy Draper & Company](#), the lauded American interior design firm, which celebrates its centennial anniversary in 2025.

Originally led by Draper and her protégé Carleton Varney – the famed creative vision behind the hotel's unique and colorful aesthetic since 1976 – today, these renovations are brought to life by Dorothy Draper & Co. Managing Partner Sebastian Varney and Design Director Rudy Saunders. They mark the cornerstone initiative of a larger, [five-year restoration project](#) to preserve Grand Hotel's Victorian era architectural character and historic façade, in addition to extensive interior improvements.

### A NEW ERA FOR AMERICA'S SUMMER PLACE

Since 1887, Grand Hotel has stood as a beacon of elegance and history on Mackinac Island. In 2025, the hotel celebrates that history by marking year three of a five-year restoration and the most significant phase of transformations in the overall restoration project. Guests visiting the hotel this season can expect newly redesigned spaces across the main floor, the heartbeat of the hotel.

“The renovation and updated design of Grand Hotel makes it the perfect venue to celebrate 100 years of Dorothy Draper & Co. We have put so much of our company's history into this project while also making a strong statement for the future direction of our firm,” says Sebastian Varney, President and co-owner of Dorothy Draper & Co. “We hope guests of Grand Hotel, as well as all members of the Mackinac Island community, are pleased with the transformation of this iconic property.”

**The Parlor** – long recognizable for celebrating the red geranium, classic Grand Hotel green hues, and array of furniture from various decades – received a transformative refresh to colors, patterns, and artwork. Varney and Saunders replaced the signature dark green tones throughout the space with a warmer, vibrant coral called “Huron Sunrise,” inspired by sunlight over the Straits of Mackinac. The design team also replaced the carpet across the entire Parlor level. While the flow carpet features a similar black background with red geraniums surrounded by leaves, at the entry three massive geraniums greet guests from the world's longest front porch. Opposite the windows, a new mural anchors the wall of the Parlor where Afternoon Tea is prepared, designed to flow seamlessly with the historic murals on the east and west walls of the space. All new window treatments, upholstery, along with new furniture and lighting additions give a refreshed feeling while retaining the character of the space.

The Parlor's **Audubon Bar – reconcepted as Baroque** – offers a tribute to Dorothy Draper and her signature Modern Baroque style. The space evokes old New York elegance with a rich palette of emerald greens, deep reds, black, gold,

and intricate fretwork. The room was painted by DiBlasi Painting of New York, an undertaking that spanned over 6 weeks. The room's pine floor-to-ceiling bookshelves have been lacquered to give a mirror-like, deep green finish. A custom bar and red velvet banquet around the perimeter of the room built by Kindel Grand Rapids from the Draper archive anchor the space. Hand painted Gracie chinoiserie wallcovering featuring local Michigan flora and fauna add true Draper glamour.

The **Main Dining Room** features a refreshed color scheme, including Jonquil yellow walls, new window treatments, and reupholstered chairs. While the chairs retain their signature Kelly green stripes, a lovely floral detail with a bouquet of pink and yellow tulips has been added to the backs. Varney and Saunders also replaced the carpet runner along the main walkway of the dining room with a new design featuring a complementary tulip bouquet on classically summer cane pattern.

“As a proud National Historic Landmark, we remain deeply committed to preserving the legacy of this iconic property for future generations,” says David Jurcak, president of Grand Hotel. “Our vision is to honor the past while thoughtfully restoring and enhancing the hotel for the next 100 years—and beyond. These restorations not only preserve the architectural integrity of Grand Hotel but also celebrate the craftsmanship and character that have defined it for generations.”

The 2025 renovations follow other updates made to key Grand Hotel spaces over the last two years, including design refreshes to Cupola Bar, signature accommodations like the Carleton Varney and Woodfill Suites. In the forthcoming final years of the five-year restoration project, guests can expect the completion of the exterior façade restoration to reintroduce the original roofline of the hotel and restore the Front Porch's wooden columns and flooring.

Guests seeking to delve further into Grand Hotel's design and partnership with Dorothy Draper & Company can book the dedicated [Dorothy Draper Design Weekend](#) package, celebrating the firm's 100-year anniversary from September 26-28.

#### **ABOUT DOROTHY DRAPER & COMPANY:**

Founded in 1925 Dorothy Draper & Company is the oldest continually operating design firm in the United States creating interiors, furnishings, fabrics and accessories that excite and delight. Dorothy Draper was the first to professionalize interior design and her work continues to inspire today. She is the only interior designer to have had a major museum retrospective of her work, receiving over one million visitors in 2006 at the Museum of the City of New York. From 1966 until his death in 2022 Carleton Varney was president of Dorothy Draper & Company and is considered one of the best known and most accomplished designers in the U.S. He helped shape the way we see the world through his iconic hospitality designs, including The Greenbrier in White Sulphur Springs, WV; Grand Hotel, Mackinac Island; and The Colony Hotel, Palm Beach. In 2022 Varney's son, Sebastian Varney, became President of Dorothy Draper & Company. With projects globally and offices in New York, Palm Beach, White Sulphur Springs, and Mackinac Island, Dorothy Draper & Company celebrates its 100<sup>th</sup> anniversary in 2025.

#### **ABOUT GRAND HOTEL:**

An iconic and storied property with deep roots on Mackinac Island in Northern Michigan, Grand Hotel welcomes guests with celebrated hospitality as it enters its 139<sup>th</sup> season in 2025. Widely known as “America's Summer Place,” the hotel proudly stands as a National Historic Landmark, ranking as the #1 Best Resort in the Midwest in Conde Nast Traveler's 2024 Readers' Choice Awards. Home to 388 signature rooms and suites, of which no two are alike, each is artfully designed in collaboration with the esteemed Dorothy Draper & Company. Guests of Grand Hotel can indulge in a variety of culinary experiences at one of the hotel's multiple dining venues and enjoy a vibrant calendar of weekend-long events, signature programming, and timeless traditions. Other hotel amenities include the Woodlands Activity Center featuring miniature golf, a BMX track, pickleball, and bike rentals; The Jewel Golf Course; renowned gardens; the Esther Williams Swimming Pool; and more. For more information, please visit [www.grandhotel.com](http://www.grandhotel.com).