

Standing on a balcony overlooking Seneca Lake at the elegant new Watkins Glen Harbor Hotel, you get a spectacular view of the harbor and miles of the big lake's pristine waters. The Coldwater Bar, invoking the Indian name for the chilly, 600-foot-deep lake, is adorned with stunning wood and stonework. When you put your head on the down feather pillow in one of the opulent suites, you'll rest easy knowing the room's wine refrigerator keeps bottles from the Finger Lakes wine trails at the perfect temperature.

Watkins Glen, the proud NASCAR town, has a new hotel worthy of Napa—California's Napa Valley, that is—as well as the swells and celebrities who flock to the races.

The Harbor Hotel grandly embraces the southern tip of Seneca Lake at 16 North Franklin Street. The \$14 million property includes an upscale restaurant, the 80-seat Blue Pointe Grill, the Patio, a lakeside dining terrace with outdoor heaters and a gas-fired stone fire pit for chilly nights, an indoor pool and fitness center, and banquet facilities for up to 300 in the Grand Ballroom.

"The hotel is beautiful and tastefully done," says Watkins Glen Mayor Judy Phillips. "It will bring all kinds of benefits to Watkins Glen and help to revitalize Main Street." The hotel has already created eighty local jobs. It also signifies a twenty per cent increase in available hotel rooms in the Watkins Glen area, and fulfills a longstanding need for upscale lodging.

With 6,000 square feet of meeting space, local officials also are hopeful that it will bring large conferences to Watkins Glen, especially over the normally quiet winter months.

"In the long term, the Harbor Hotel is a critical piece of the puzzle in evolving the Finger Lakes region into a year-round destination," says Paul Thomas, director of the Seneca Lake Wine Trail. Local wineries are working with the hotel to create a wine list that represents locally produced wine, he said.

"We're thrilled to be in Watkins Glen," said David Hart, president and CEO of Hart Hotels, at the recent opening. The Hart company, based in Buffalo, owns and operates a dozen hotels from Buffalo to Maine to Park City, Utah, including two others in the Finger Lakes region—the Holiday Inn in downtown Ithaca, and the Inn at the Finger Lakes in Auburn.

The Watkins Glen hotel is decidedly upscale, with room rates ranging from \$249 per night for a village view room (all rates are two-night minimum stay) up to \$419 per night for the opulent Admiral Suite. Room amenities include high definition flat screen television, pillow-topped mattress, 250 thread count linens, down feather pillows, and high speed Internet access. Some rooms include patios overlooking Seneca

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Courtesy of Hart Hotels (2)



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Top: The Patio for outdoor lakeside dining at the Harbor Hotel. Above: The unique New York State wine collection in the Blue Pointe Grill. Left: The hotel's indoor pool and spa.

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