

Historic Barrelhouse at Zorn venue to host weddings and special events in 148-year-old building



Joseph S. Pete Aug 29, 2020



Barrelhouse at Zorn opens in Michigan City on Sept. 10. Provided

A historic brick building dating to 1871 has been renovated into a wedding and special events venue.

Michigan City-based UpperCross Development Group created a 6,000-square-foot special events space in a building where a pre-Prohibition brewery, founded by a German immigrant, made and stored wooden beer barrels in the late 19th and early 20th centuries. Barrelhouse at Zorn, in Michigan City's Elston Grove Historic District, now occupies the first floor, while the second floor has been transformed into three apartments.

“It’s been so exciting to be a part of bringing this historic building back to life,” Barrelhouse at Zorn Director Sharon Harte said. “The entire venue will be a place for people to make wonderful memories. The restored brick walls, overhead timbers and original hardwood floors, along with the interior doors and trim salvaged from a historic building on Franklin Street, have really made this a one of a kind space in the area.”

The main event space can host more than 300 people, and a dedicated bride room can double as a smaller events space, hosting 20 to 50 people for private dining events, corporate meetings, rehearsal dinners, bridal showers, reunions and other special events.

Barrelhouse at Zorn includes a catering prep kitchen, an industrial-themed bar, and an overhead glass garage door that opens into an outdoor patio. The bathrooms were carved out of a concrete refrigerator area and adorned with elegant lighting, a common vestibule with an artisan powder-coated metal sink, and rustic craft-made metal dividers.

“The recent updates to the Barrelhouse are amazing,” Michigan City Chamber of Commerce President Katie Eaton said. “Michigan City is fortunate to have this historic structure once again repurposed into a special place for the current market needs.”

Barrelhouse will partner with the neighboring Zorn Brew Works, including for private brewing events where a couple can work with a master brewer to formulate the beer that will be served at their wedding.

“How’s that for a bachelor party?” said Rob Harte, principal of UpperCross Development Group. “Having worked collaboratively with Zorn Brew Works founder John Van Prooyen since 2015, I was thrilled to have the opportunity to solidify a more formal working relationship with him and his staff to be the exclusive liquor provider for events at the Barrelhouse.”

The venue also lined up group package discounts at 100 vacation homes in Michigan City through a partnership with Beachwalk Vacation Rentals.

“The brides have really responded favorably to the idea of having their entire family and wedding party staying minutes away from the venue in fully appointed vacation homes on the shores of Lake Michigan,” Rob Harte said.

Michigan City's Redevelopment Commission backed the project with grants to restore the facade and develop residential units.

“Without the support and commitment of the Redevelopment Commission, this project would have never moved forward,” said Anastacia Fratto, principal of UpperCross Development. “Our experience with the RDC has certainly whetted our appetite for more projects in Michigan City. We are excited about bringing more projects forward soon.”

A grand opening event will take place from 4-7 p.m. Sept. 10.

For more information, visit www.barrelhouseatzorn.com, email info@barrelhouseatzorn.com or call 219-243-7184.