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Julie and Rob Redding, pictured with their daughters, preside over a 120-year-old inn filled with memorabilia.



# The Hack-Ma-Tack Inn

blends past & present

By Rick Coates

The Hack-Ma-Tack Inn (Hack for short) has been enjoyed by generations of visitors to Cheboygan and resorters on Mullet Lake. The 120-year-old former hunting and fishing lodge has become a popular dining destination where guests leave with more than just a great dinner.

"There is a special vibe to this building that guests experience when they are here. It is like walking back into history," said Rob Redding, whose family owns The Hack.

Redding's parents bought the place in 1979 to become the fifth owners of The Hack. Now Rob and his wife Julie have taken the reins with one eye on the past and the other on the future.

"I know the history and heritage of The Hack is important to who we are but it is also important to think about the future," said Redding. "One thing we have been doing is bringing in bands and musicians that typically don't play around here. Plus, having wine and beer tastings."

## WINE & MUSIC

The Hack and Redding's will host one of those special events this Friday June 14 when guitarist Bobby East performs after a wine and food tasting. Wine expert Tom Doran will taste seven wines paired up with specialties from the Hack from 6:30 to 8:30 p.m., with East performing an acoustic show afterwards.

"We specialize in wines and Tom is one of the best; he was here last fall and it was a sell out," said Redding. "He is the one who taught me that this trade show type format where people taste and sample food at their leisure is the best format."

Redding is also excited about Bobby East (of Kid Rock and Reefermen fame) returning to The Hack.

"Bobby is a very quiet and humble guy who lets his guitar speak for him," said Redding. "I knew this guy was great but not how respected he was in the industry. He was telling me about all these guitarist he knows -- guys like Billy Gibbons of ZZ Top.

So last year I was backstage at the ZZ Top concert waiting to meet Billy Gibbons, when I told Billy I was friends with Bobby East, Billy cleared everyone else out and sat down and talked with me for 15 minutes about how Bobby is one of the greatest guitarists out there."

## GREAT LAKES FISH

While Redding will host a handful of music and tasting events through the summer and fall (they close in mid-October) the focus will be on their bread-and-butter: great food and drinks. The menu is loaded with Great Lakes fish, award-winning prime rib and melts in your mouth buffalo tenderloin. Toss in an impressive wine and beer list, entertaining bartenders and wait staff and the ambiance of the building and The Hack is a special place. Regulars and resorters often boat to The Hack located near the mouth of the Cheboygan River where it empties into Mullet Lake.

"I feel fortunate to have grown up at the Hack, I was about nine when my father put me on a milk crate and I started washing dishes. I remember feeling so good getting my first paycheck," said Redding. "After that I did just about everything from cooking, waiting tables and bartender, bussing tables. That is one of the keys now if one of the employees is sick or doesn't come in I can step in."

The Hack is still very much a family run business with Rob's wife Julie active with marketing and filling in where needed.

"Plus my dad still helps out, he does a little bit of everything," said Redding. "I started managing the place about 14 years ago and for the past several years we have been living upstairs but will move into a house down the road this summer."

## GUEST ROOMS TOO

The Reddings are now taking on renovating the upstairs and plan to have lodging for overnight guests in the near future.

"The place was originally a hunting and fishing lodge that was built in the 1880s by Watson Beebe with a Native American guide," said Redding. "Since they built it in



Built in the 1800s as a hunting and fishing lodge, the Hack-Ma-Tack is a "destination" inn for Cheboygan and Mullet Lake.

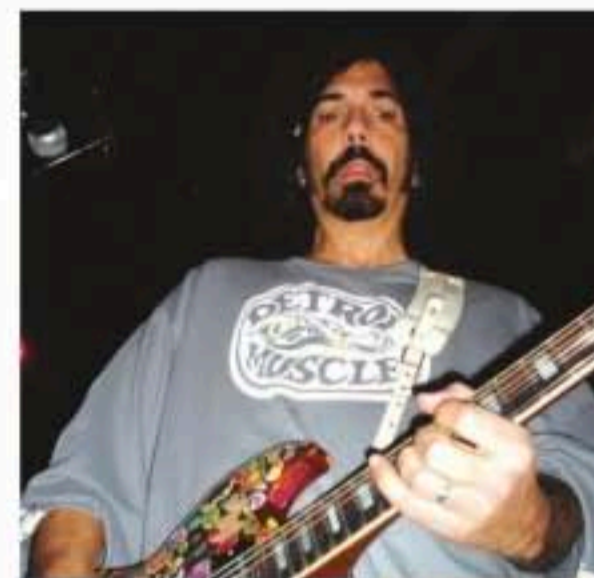
the tamarack style, the Indians of the area gave the place the name Hack-Ma-Tack. There use to be lodging upstairs, so we are going to bring that back."

He adds that guests love the views.

"We hear all the time how stunning it is with all the trees, the water and of course all the items inside people have given the place over the years. We have had people tell us they have been coming here since they were in high chairs and I have met fourth generation family members whose families have shared with them the tradition of the Hack."

Some of those fourth generations of visitors will be on hand this Friday night.

"I chuckle because it is a word of mouth sort of thing around here. We are almost sold out for Friday night just by the people who live on Mullet Lake spreading the word," said Redding. "I had someone say once, 'wow we never knew you were here until our friends just told us they have been coming here for years.' I responded, 'well this is a special place sort of by invitation so I am glad your friends have invited you.' I was just joking but in some ways that is how our regulars feel about The Hack and that is how



Detroit's 'guitar godzilla' Bobby East brings it on at the Hack this Friday.

we operate it."

Catch guitarist Bobby East this Friday, June 14 after a special wine and food tasting from 6:30 to 8:30 p.m. Reservations suggested by calling 231-625-2919. See the menu at [hackmatackinn.com](http://hackmatackinn.com).



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