

FEATURES



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Iconic



The Grosse Pointe Yacht Club recently earned Distinguished Club status by BoardRoom magazine.

FILE PHOTOS

Grosse Pointe Yacht Club earns Distinguished Club status

By Jody McVeigh
Editor

After nearly a year of anticipation, the Grosse Pointe Yacht Club has revealed it recently was designated a Distinguished Club — with special “Iconic” designation — by BoardRoom magazine.

Just to be considered for the designation is an honor, said General Manager Aaron Wagner.

“In order to be considered for nomination, there’s a panel of manager and club executives from around the world that Distinguished Clubs goes to for appointments,” Wagner said. “So it’s an honor just to be on that. They obviously thought we were something.”

“As far back as February 2018, they started to really look at us,” he continued. “I started Feb. 6. At the end of February, we got a generic email giving us a heads up, ‘We’re considering you.’”

Taking into consideration the club’s projects, reputation and overall services, Distinguished Clubs sent its president, Keith Jarrett, co-founder of BoardRoom magazine, to Grosse Pointe to conduct an on-site evaluation in September.

“We did a full, six-hour

day,” Wagner said. “It started with me, with a tour of the club. He met with our commodore and our historian, Larry Stephenson.”

After lunch, Jarrett met with other department heads, including Membership Director Susan Hughes, Executive Chef Colby Newman, Food and Beverage Director Joe Hooge, Harbor Master Alex Turner and Facility Manager James Stevenson.

“It was an all-day affair,” Wagner said. “His evaluation was down to the dust on the wall — a white-glove deal. It’s their reputation they put behind us. It’s not a popularity contest; it’s a big deal.”

Distinguished Clubs are designated according to category — country clubs; golf clubs; residential clubs; city and athletic clubs; and yacht, beach and lake clubs. The recognition lasts one year; then clubs are re-evaluated to maintain their status.

“Not only are we a Distinguished Club,” Wagner said, “but we also got the prestigious ‘Iconic’ designation, of which there are less than a dozen of any kind of club.”

For the honor, the Grosse Pointe Yacht Club

received a plaque for its lobby and awards for staff members.

“This has been a unique experience,” Wagner said, noting other honors the club has earned have been “basically a popularity contest.”

Distinguished Clubs is a merit-based awards program that determines awards based on an impartial formulaic assessment, as well as the member experience. While facilities and products are observed and noted, data points gathered focus on the intangible — governance, policies, procedures, attitude, ambiance, service and the club’s traditions, history, lore and captured pride.

“When they come out, there are specific areas they look at,” Wagner said. “It’s weighted in certain ways that are swayed toward member satisfaction and member experience. The intangible quality is the most important. Anybody can build a club with a couple million dollars ... but it’s our history and heritage, the feeling you get here, that’s the weight of it.”

“We’re going to live up to it,” he continued.

Wagner said the club is committed to continuing

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The Marine Activity Center was added to the club in August 2017.



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The outdoor family recreation area is a fairly recent addition to the Grosse Pointe Yacht Club.

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ICONIC:

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its legacy and noted its recent implementation of the Entrepreneurial Operating System management system, which

will help standardize the management process and improve it.

Additionally, he said, the club's willingness to upgrade and improve is evident in the recent additions of its Marine Activity Center, family

recreation area and bowling recreation area.

"The projects are within the footprint of the (historic) building and fit with the aesthetics," Wagner said. "We are keeping up with the times and getting ahead of the times. We're leading the charge — which is a big reason why we're not only a Distinguished Club, but 'Iconic.'"

Wagner also said he was asked to serve as a panelist on the Distinguished Clubs nomination committee, which he said he hopes will bring more weight to the club as well.

"From all our perspectives — members and staff — we're on cloud nine," he said. "This also legitimizes the hard work my team has put forth over the years, way before me. It's a great culmination of the work we've done."

"We're being responsible and investing in the club while at the same time recruiting people," he continued. "Maintaining it is a huge responsibility. We've got a lot to live up to. Next year around September, we'll expect another visit."



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