



## *Catering & Banquet Facilities*

### ***The Legend Begins.***

#### *Barn 1840's*

*This location was one of the Original Barns in Mequon dating to 1840's when the barn and the living space were allowed to be attached.*

#### **Club Forest 1872**

Dating back to the 1800s, **Club Forest** was the site of famous to infamous transactions, from real estate deals and gambling to a safe haven for organized crime, it has also been the site of paranormal phenomena.

In 1872, **Club Forest** was opened (under a different name) as a combination residence and dining/entertainment establishment. Locally owned and operated, many an evening was spent by local Milwaukeeans enjoying the fine food, ambiance and camaraderie always in great supply. The mainstay of the business was derived from the businessmen and farmers in and around the area, now known as Mequon.

The property changed hands several times, including proprietor Mickey Goldman, who promptly named the restaurant, "**Mickey Goldman's Club Forest**" Goldman's Club Forest quickly gained a notable reputation. During the 1940s and 50s **Club Forest** was often visited by local and national celebrities. A discreet place for gambling, rumor has it that **Club Forest** became a safe haven for operatives' of organized crime as well. Entering the lounge, one could not help but notice the **black carpeting with red circles beneath the tables** and chairs. What you could not see was the tables that pulled out of the wall, converting one table into a **Roulette Wheel**, another into a **Blackjack Table**. The use of red and black carpeting was more clearly understood when a former manager indicated the tips given to employees were the **red and black chips** that had fallen to the floor and collected at the end of the evening. The exterior of **the current kitchen was formerly a silo**, where **slot machines** could be found.

It is well known that Chicago Mob boss, Al Capone, had many ties to Wisconsin. Tempted by its, proximity, Capone was drawn to **Club Forest** and all it had to offer. He was a welcomed and frequent guest. Quickly, the restaurant became infamous for its "offerings." The construction of several upstairs "guest rooms," complete with front and back stairwells, red (a/k/a raid) lights, and an underground tunnel leading from the basement to the river created the escape routes Capone and his cronies were looking for. Although disputed by some, Mickey Goldman's **Club Forest** was indeed a brothel, doing quite well during the lean prohibition days. One of the rooms was so popular there was a **doorbell 'installed in the doorjamb so the young lady could signal for the next "guest". . . it is still there today... can you find it?**

In 1953, Dorothy and Dick Liersch purchased the restaurant and named it **Dick Liersch' Club Forest**. A bit of a celebrity with family and friends, Dick Liersch was one

of the reasons **Club Forest** remained so popular. Dick and his wife lived in the residence with their two children, Liersch ran the Day-to-day operations, but much remained the same from the Goldman ownership era.

Upstairs, in what was the Liersch master bedroom, could be found a **machine gun mounted on the windowsill**. Other windowsill markings suggest that guns were mounted throughout the upper part of the residence. **Under the staircase was an electrically charged chair**. Rumor has it that in the midst of an evening's gambling and drinking, a patron would be taped in the chair and "jolted" causing them to jump from the chair, hit their head on the downward slope of the staircase and knock themselves out, to the **uproarious laughter of the onlookers to this practical joke**.

In the main dining room, in front of the "**vine window**" would be a piano. The remarkable thing about this particular piano was that **Liberace** made his performance debut on it at **Club Forest** and why not? His parents were introduced to one another by Dick Liersch. Another well known celebrity was known to "**swing from the rafters**" in the dining room - literally. The swinging occurred from the second wagon wheel suspended from the ceiling by none other than swinger, **Wally Cox**.

#### *When Ghostly Things Happen*

Some tall tales and spirits, others call them ghosts. What they all have in common is that employees, past and present, had seen them make their presence known within the walls of **Club Forest**. Who could this apparition be? Employers some of whom absolutely refuse to enter the basement room believe without question that a spirit or ghost inhabited Club forest. **It is seemingly a ghost of integrity though, because as of yet no one has been harmed**. This ghost, perhaps ghosts, instead appears to enjoy surprising, in some cases even shocking, unsuspecting employees and patrons.

*Antics include: salt and pepper shakers rising into the air then thudding back down to the table, sounds of tables and chairs being moved upstairs when no one is up there, footsteps coming down the wooden stairs, again when no living being is upstairs and other ghostly encounters have occurred in the basement room.*

Inexplicably, the staircase of this room ends in midair. The presence of a ghost had been felt down there often. When a meeting of professional mediums dined at **Club Forest**, they were certain that there was paranormal activity; some employees quit, never returning. When queried, they simply replied, "because of the ghosts" . . .

#### ***Just Plain Fun at Armon's***

Whether out of retribution or just plain fun, **the ghost has a permanent fixture at Armon's**. Like the celebrities that have graced these halls before, the ghosts have gained and maintained the attention of all that enter this building. Have fun selecting your favorite **ghost table**, request a tour of the rooms, and inquire about the history.