

North Pier Light on Lake Michigan near Silver Beach



SO YOU WANT TO LIVE IN ...

## ST. JOSEPH

This Lake Michigan community is thriving with new development, great golf, and year-round maritime spirit

**T**HE TOWN OF ST. JOSEPH—or St. Joe, as locals call it—has a distinct soundtrack. It starts with a whisper, a freshwater breeze off the languid waves of Lake Michigan making its way to the shore of Silver Beach. Couples here are soaking up the sun on their striped beach towels while children bury each other in the warm, golden sand near the grass-topped dunes.

A few steps up from the water, the cheerful beat of music comes from an octagon-shaped building that houses the Silver Beach Carousel; families visiting from around the Midwest pack the space as youngsters impatiently wait their turn to ride the tall pink flamingo or sit in the ornate peacock chariot.

The sound of conversation and laughter carries just up the bluff to the brick streets of downtown, lined with independent shops, cafés, and galleries with colorful awnings. Skinny maple trees shade Adirondack chairs along the sidewalk on State Street, where

the 1939 G&M Variety shop sells candy at the counter. For more-lasting pleasures, the upscale Harbor Town Interiors decor shop makes beach-chic style easy with its sleek nautical accents.

There's often a parade, festival, or concert going on. And with a busy working harbor and new businesses moving to the area, there's a lot of economic growth here, too, including the new Inn at Harbor Shores on the north side of town, a luxe 92-room hotel plus condominiums, cottages, and marina space for lease.

A condo at Harbor Shores starts at \$190,000, which isn't far from the \$185,000 average home price around town. For the best water views, new development and contemporary-style homes along Lakeshore Drive start around \$1 million. But fixer-uppers and even historic Queen Anne-style homes within walking distance of the beach can be a real steal at around \$250,000.

"I call St. Joseph my little slice of paradise," says resident Susan Solon. "Not everyone gets to live in a place that feels like vacation."