



Review: The Edgewater

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The Edgewater Review

By [Katherine Rodeghier](#) - May 15, 2018

She stands proudly in her Maidenform bra telling all who view her how she danced the night away at [The Edgewater](#). The framed advertisement hanging on a wall of The Edgewater in Madison, Wis., captures the look and feel of the 1940s when the hotel drew Woody Herman and other big bands to play for celebrity guests on its rooftop dance floor.

This member of the Historic Hotels of America preserved that ambience when, in 2014, it renovated its 1940s building on Lake Mendota and built a new lakefront tower next door. Many of The Edgewater's combined 202 guestrooms have views of the lake, a prime location just a few blocks from Wisconsin's state capitol and next door to the University of Wisconsin-Madison. It's the only Four Diamond hotel in Dane County. Rates begin around \$220 on June weekdays, \$300 on weekends.

Together the two towers and public plaza between them function as an urban resort with a free, 40-slip boat pier. The one-acre plaza's terrace converts to an ice skating rink in winter and hosts outdoor events in warm weather. Brewgrass <CQ> Fridays, in partnership with Door County Brewing Co., will feature performances by national bluegrass bands and a traditional Wisconsin fish fry on Friday nights June 1–Aug. 31, this year. Outdoor movies on the water will be Tuesdays June 12–Aug. 28.

The older hotel tower, built in 1948 in an Art Moderne style similar to Art Deco, looks like it belongs not on a Wisconsin lakeshore but on the sand of Miami Beach. The place to see and be seen in the state capital, it drew celebrities from Elvis Presley to Elton John, Bob Hope to Bob Marley. Its spa, part of the \$100 million renovation four years ago, covers two floors, offering body treatments, including couples massages, a relaxation pool, salon, rooms for group fitness classes and cardio workouts on equipment overlooking the lake. The Boathouse, a two-level restaurant open during the summer, captures the Wisconsin vibe of casual lakefront dining on burgers, brats and peel-and-eat shrimp washed down with craft beers and Wisconsin's classic brandy old fashioned cocktails. Steel bands and other live entertainment perform on an outdoor deck next to the boat pier in summer.

The new tower has six levels of guestrooms and two of condos, plus four of The Edgewater's five meeting and event spaces and three of its five dining venues. Augie's Tavern takes its name from Augie Faulkner, The Edgewater's first general manager and an owner for nearly 50 years. His showmanship and love of the city made him the de facto mayor of Madison. Along with classic cocktails and wine from an extensive list, the tavern offers pub fare and small bites. The hotel's flagship restaurant, The Statehouse, operates all day, every day, serving modern Midwestern cuisine, such as a fish fry and cheese curds along with steaks and creative twists on classics, many made with locally sourced ingredients. Diners at tables overlooking the waterfront enjoy a great view of the sunset over Lake Mendota.

The Edgewater

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