

doors + hardware

METAL AND SPECIALTY DOORS

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The Making of a Door Story:

The Landing: Creating an Experience One Door at a Time

**By Lauren Stemple and
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How do you design a restaurant that is as beautiful as the shores of Northern Lake Michigan, and as welcoming as your favorite local hangout? How do you enable a venue to stay as fresh and appetizing as the great food it serves its customers, all while battling a high-moisture environment and high-volume traffic? The Landing Restaurant in Charlevoix, Mich., shows us how.

Owner Preston Parish decided to create a delightful experience for the community with these goals in mind.

He accomplished this by making wise product selections, one door at a time, that would enhance the surrounding ambiance of this favored destination.

Doors are an important element to the building envelope because they welcome every visitor that visits the establishment. They may seem minimal compared to the food and hospitality created by the hosts of this fast-growing establishment, but they are the one building component that every visitor will touch.

Aluminum stile and rail doors at the side entrance to The Landing.



Aluminum stile and rail doors are also found at the front entrance.

The main entrance of a restaurant has many functions beyond separating the inside of the building from the outside weather, temperature, and unwanted visitors such as animals and intruders. The doors in the main entrance should reflect the brand of the restaurant, whether that be in size, color, texture or style. A “one off” restaurant, such as The Landing, may choose to have a main entrance door designed specifically for that location or the owner’s preference.

The selection process will change for a chain of restaurants. For example, a chain of restaurants may want to have a recognizable entrance – or signature entrance – so traveling patrons will recognize their favorite restaurant in other cities. The main entrance must also be engineered for high performance, as the doors must continue to function properly even through max-capacity traffic levels. The front entrance should also be easy to maintain and have low maintenance requirements, enabling it to remain as attractive as the beautifully plated meals served inside the restaurant.

The Landing Restaurant chose painted white aluminum stile and rail doors manufactured by Special-Lite, Inc. These doors feature a lifetime warranty on the tie-rod and corner clip construction. In high traffic areas, the corners are the typical location of door failure.

Many restaurants have side entrances to perform as exit-only doors, but some also serve as access doors to attractive outdoor eating areas. These doors may match the main entrance or have a coordinating design. Although



these side openings may not see the foot traffic that the main entrance does, they must also function smoothly, be easily cleaned, and have low maintenance requirements. Many times, food servers must open these doors hands-free to deliver food and beverages to patrons.

One important feature on a side entrance used to access an outside eating area is to enhance visibility. Seeing what is on the other side of the door is an important safety feature– to the user as well as the unsuspecting person standing on the other side.

On the lake side, The Landing chose to match the front entrance with a painted white aluminum stile and rail door with a mid-rail. The painted aluminum surface is easy to clean and offers protection from corrosion in a wet environment.

The back door or service entrance of a restaurant is generally located at the back of the building and is the utility door used for delivery of food, equipment, and as an employee entrance. Even though this opening lacks the foot traffic from patrons, the action it does receive can be abusive. From the rigors of deliveries on hand carts to providing a secure door to keep unwanted or uninvited guests



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from entering—this door needs to be strong, resistant to dents and scratches, have low maintenance requirements and be easy to clean. This work-horse door also needs to match the building’s design and be available in extra wide sizing. The Landing chose a wood grain textured FRP/

Aluminum hybrid door for the natural look of wood without all the disadvantages of a regular wood door. They also went one step further and asked Special-Lite to ‘plank’ the corrosion-resistant FRP for that beachy feel.

In a restaurant, there are always patron restrooms. No one needs to be reminded how important these doors are to a customer. Patrons commonly infer *clean restroom = clean kitchen*. For an establishment to communicate that cleanliness is important, the restrooms have to be clean. All architectural products for this very important room should be selected with easy cleaning as a priority. The Landing knew this and wanted more coastal charm on the interior of their restaurant, so they again chose to use the wood grain textured FRP/Aluminum hybrid door—this time in a stained finish with the same ‘plank’ style.

Some may feel that doors are no match for a delicious lobster roll or

citrus-cured salmon florets—or above all—the relaxing social experience on this beautiful shoreline, but at The Landing, even the doors support the brand and experience that Parrish sought to create.

“We knew that the location, being near the water with the humidity, could be corrosive and harsh on the building products we used. We also believed the level of activity we generated would place a significant demand on the architecture and facility. These reasons are exactly why we chose Special-Lite for our building entries and other framing and partitioning solutions,” Parish explained.

The building, the setting, the food and the friendliness consistently draw loyal patrons, friends, and tourists to this gem located on Lake Charlevoix, near the Lake Michigan shoreline. They all enter this experience through a well-thought-out and professionally manufactured door. ■



Fiberglass wood grain bathroom doors for durability.



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