



Michigan

Michigan's second Houlihan's Restaurant & Bar opens today at Breton Village

By [Garret Ellison](#)

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GRAND RAPIDS, MI — Michigan's second [Houlihan's](#) is celebrating a formal grand opening today in a [Breton Village Mall outlet](#), marking a return to new restaurant building after the recession for the national chain.

The Grand Rapids location of the Leawood, Kansas-based American casual restaurant & bar chain is located at 1968 Breton Road SE, a hop, skip and a jump away from the East Grand Rapids border.

"This was a great opportunity to come into a community that could fit our model pretty well," said Suzanne Fentress, a senior marketing manager at the privately owned Houlihan's Restaurants Inc.

"We have what I think you look for in a neighborhood restaurant, which is what that development is needing," she said.

The large lunch and dinner restaurant features seating for 165 customers in a dining room, bar area and 80-seat patio overlooking Breton Road. It employs nearly 100 people including management. Fentress said employee benefits are available for those averaging at least 30 hours per week.



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[Sally Finneran | sfinnera@mlive.com](#)

A server carries out food Friday, June 29, 2012 at Houlihan's Restaurant and Bar. The restaurant officially opens Monday, July 2, 2012. (Sally Finneran | MLive)

[Houlihan's Restaurant & Bar opens in Breton Village shopping center gallery \(10 photos\)](#)

The chain started in 1972 in Kansas City and operates 82 corporate or franchise locations in 18 states. The other Michigan location is in at the Lansing Mall on West Saginaw Highway. Fentress said the chain has returned to expansion mode after the recession. The next location they plan to open is in Rogers, Ark.

The chain is best known for their stuffed 'Shrooms, but Fentress said the menu has been designed to appeal to everyone in some way, through large, small or sharable plates, or vegetarian and gluten-free options.

General manager Peggy Fischer said everything on the menu is made from scratch, from bar juices to the guacamole.

"We do have the traditional American fare, but our menu features 19 different cultures," she said. "We've got everything from hummus to taco salad to handmade potstickers."

The chain [recently got a plug](#) on the 'Today' show with Matt Lauer, who interviewed Tod Marks, senior projects editor for Consumer Reports, about a reader survey of full service chains. In the pub style or grill category, Houlihan's got high marks.

"Above average, food, mood and service," he said on 'Today.' "They improved their game in recent years compared to earlier surveys."

The kitchen tries to source local ingredients whenever possible, said Fischer. The bar features an extensive wine list and signature martinis, as well as Michigan craft beer taps like Founders Pale Ale, Mount Pleasant Train Wreck, New Holland Full Circle, and of course, Bell's Oberon.

"The thing we want to make sure people understand, is that we're fun and energetic," Fischer said. "Hopefully, if (customers) come through, they will come back."

Visit Houlihan's Grand Rapids on [Facebook](#) for more information.

http://www.mlive.com/entertainment/grand-rapids/index.ssf/2012/07/dining_out_restaurant_review_h.html