

FEATURED STORY

Metro Detroit On Deck

BY: MELINDA CLYNES, 8/21/2008



Metro Detroiters have an untamed zest for outdoor drinking and dining once the thermostat hits 70 degrees.

And whether you want to explore German wheat beers amongst the fireflies at a brewpub, shimmer with martini-drinking 20-somethings as the clock strikes midnight, or lip-lock under the stars after a fancy-schmancy dinner, the choices are many.

These picks include perennial favorites and new-to-the-scene locales, all of them enjoying a more secluded, away-from-traffic appeal.

[Royal Oak Brewery](#), Royal Oak



A favorite among local residents – who prefer to drink and dine sans car fumes, motorcycle din and the hoards of scene-sters strolling along Main



St. – the Royal Oak Brewery’s secluded Biergarten is the perfect spot to toast Michigan summer evenings in shorts and a t-shirt. With a Summer Wit in hand, you can chill under the

pergola or at the seven-stool bar with fellow lovers of ales and lagers. More likely crowded than not, this well-worn, much-loved back deck beckons those who believe life is too short to drink swill.

Assaggi Bistro, Ferndale

Assaggi’s cavernous patio, adorned with Romanesque statues and a copper water fountain, scores high on the romance meter. With tables spaced far apart, there’s a sense of privacy even while dining among other patrons. In the event you don’t fall in love with your date, you’ll at least fall in love with your meal – for both its good looks and flavor. A fig tree, ornamental grasses and arborvitae line one edge of the stamped concrete patio transforming this Ferndale back alley into a dreamy oasis. Candles at dusk, unobtrusive waiters, and a lounge singer crooning in Italian add to the ambiance.

Camp Ticondaroga, Troy

With a two-level terrace, dappled with geraniums, and overlooking a golf course, this may be the best patio in town for kids. Why? They serve plates of hot, out-of-the-oven chocolate chip cookies. Perfect with a tall glass of milk on a sleepy summer’s eve.



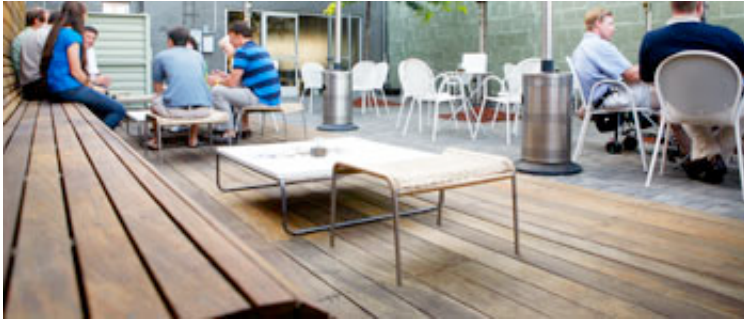
D’Amato’s, Royal Oak

Only on Friday nights can you sashay up the Washington Building’s marble staircase to D’Amato’s Sunset Lounge for hip hop grooves. While this cool second-floor space sports a planter with four substantial white pines, it’s vying for an urban groove.

the bosco, Ferndale

Calling all hipsters! While the bosco prides itself on a somewhat stand-offish obscurity (even the Woodward Ave. front door is easily missed), you don’t need a secret handshake to enter. A quick pass by the bar and lounge, pulsating with a dance mix, and through the





glass doorwall will land you on the mellower, tree-adorned side of lounge life. Cool, post-modernist chairs and tables, and comfy, curved wooden benches add to the sleek vibe. If you could create a swanky lounge outside

your back door, this is how it would look. While candles sprinkle the tables, part of the patio's allure is the darkness. So grab a cocktail from the too-cool-to-smile bartender and take in the stylish scene.

La Dolce Vita, Detroit

The most romantic patio in metro Detroit. Hands down. Enough said.

Big Rock Chophouse, Birmingham

A busy Birmingham social hub, the Big Rock Chop House patio attracts a wide range of folks – couples in foursome, after-work buddies and girls-night-out entourages.

Encircling the converted 1931 train depot-turned-restaurant are glowing torches and a sea of black-eyed Susan and perennial grasses. The food is dependably tasty, and as an added bonus, Big Rock brews its own grog. Be sure to sample the Hefeweizen for a quick transport to summer in Bavaria.



Please note: no shortage

here of males in polo shirts with sherbet-colored sweaters jauntily draped around the neck; afterall, this *is* Birmingham.

The Lark, West Bloomfield

A slice of garden bliss on a mid-summer's eve, The Lark's slate patio is lovingly decorated with hollyhock, sweet potato vine, and blankets of golden marjoram – all under a grape-laden pergola. To nab one of the few sweetly romantic outdoor tables for cocktails or gourmet delights, reserve two weeks ahead.

So, as summer breezes turn to autumn gusts, August is the time to get while the getting's good. It's the perfect temp to pick up the tempo and indulge out-of-doors as much as the dwindling daylight allows. And with so many swell choices at hand, your mood can take the lead.

Listlessly romantic? Sun-saturated? Moon-draped... or maybe even

moonstruck? What's it gonna be?

Melinda Clynes is a metro-Detroit-based freelancer and a regular contributor to metromode and Model D.

Photos:

Big Rock (lead photo) - Birmingham

Royal Oak Brewery

Camp Ticonderoga - Rochester

Bosco - Ferndale

Big Rock - Birmingham

Photographs by [Marvin Shaouni](#)

Marvin Shaouni is the managing photographer for [Metromode](#) & [Model D](#).