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Bars & Clubs

Metro Detroit patios

Seven spots to scope out this summer

By Nikki Stephan

There's nothing quite comparable to summer in Michigan. After six solid months of cold and dreary days, the instant warm weather hits, the streets are lined with bikers, runners, shoppers and people simply soaking up the warmth they've been craving. We know we only have a limited amount of time before the chilly weather creeps back in, so we take full advantage of every opportunity to be outdoors during the summer months.

One favorite summer pastime that never seems to get old is drinking and dining outside. Lucky for us, there is no shortage of outdoor patios in metro Detroit that cater to every flavor and personality, whether it be quaint and romantic or rowdy and entertaining.

There's much more to a patio's appeal than what surrounds it. There's also the décor, the elements of nature and the overall ambiance of the location that all add up to a desirable patio experience.

Here are seven different metro Detroit restaurants with outdoor patios that are more than deserving of your time and hard-earned dollars this summer:

Rosie O'Grady's

279 Nine Mile - Ferndale
248-591-9163

Rosie O'Grady's Ferndale location is situated at a high traffic area on the corner of Allen and 9 Mile, which makes it ideal for the always-entertaining activity of people watching when you're seated in one of the outdoor areas. Rosie's has a patio and then some, with outdoor seating wrapped around the north, west and south sides of the building. There's an indoor bar with several TVs separating both major sections of the outdoor area. Tall doors with windows lead you to the outdoor seating, and these doors are often open. Seating ranges from plush, comfy chairs to your traditional outdoor plastic seating. One major bonus is the heat lamps for when nights are on the cooler side (and those puppies omit some serious heat!). In the back seating area, there are also two TVs and a brightly painted mural of 9 Mile on



the side of the building. Since Rosie's is a cross between a pub, sports bar and club on Friday and Saturday nights, don't go there expecting a quiet, romantic evening. It's definitely a lively venue, especially on a warm summer night.

Como's Restaurant

22812 Woodward - Ferndale
248-548-5005

Como's has one of the most famous patios in Ferndale, and the spacious patio area has a whole lot going on. There is plastic covering for the patio sides for the chilly nights as well as a variety of heat lamps scattered across the patio. Décor changes throughout the year, but currently the bar has a Hawaiian theme, and there are parrots, tons of flowers and vibrant, rainbow-colored drapery all throughout the patio. Two unique aspects of this patio are that it has two decks for entertainment, and two tables each have a tree growing out of the middle (sounds weird, but looks pretty cool). Similar to the rainbow drapery, rainbow-colored adornments hang from several of the tree branches. Como's patio is also accommodating for the sports lovers because there are nine TVs scattered throughout it.



La Dolce Vita

17546 Woodward - Detroit
313-865-0331

The phrase "la dolce vita" means "the sweet life" in Italian, and you definitely understand how this restaurant's serene outdoor area relates to that saying once you dine or drink there. But don't blink as you're driving through the Palmer Park District on Woodward, or you'll risk missing the non-descript LDV sign on the front of the restaurant. A large iron gate is situated at the entrance to the courtyard, which features a bar and a mix of tables with and without umbrellas. Lush foliage covers the back wall, tall trees are adorned with twinkling white lights and the sounds of chirping birds and live jazz music fill the air. This is the perfect patio for an intimate and romantic evening. La Dolce Vita bartender Holly Glod has been working there for about 14 years, and she lovingly refers to the restaurant as a "very special place that's not well known" – but that's what keeps it special and different from the area's other Italian restaurants, she noted.



Majestic Theatre

4140 Woodward - Detroit
313-833-9700

The Alley Deck is part of the Majestic entertainment center in Detroit and located a few steps above the Magic Stick. Being that it's located in one of downtown's most popular entertainment spots, this place screams fun. Catch a live show at the Magic Stick or play a few games at Garden Bowl, then end your night upstairs on the patio. The outdoor patio deck overlooks Woodward and Midtown. There's a bar with a TV, as well as both covered and uncovered seating areas. This patio also boasts shuffleboard, for those in the gaming mood. An added bonus of the Alley Deck is its summer brunch menu, which includes scrumptious dishes like sticky buns and a Cali-style breakfast burrito.



Dominick's

812 Monroe St. - Ann Arbor



734-662-5414

Dominick's legendary Sangria may be its most famous feature, but the lively patio slides in at a close second. Located near a relatively quiet section of the University of Michigan campus, Dominick's patio is surrounded by a tall, wooden fence laced with a full-bodied leafy vine, removing the sense of being in the middle of a large city. The patio includes several picnic tables sprinkled amidst a street lamp for lighting, a wooden gazebo for private parties and several trees. It's no surprise that you'll likely find large glass jars filled with Sangria on top of most of those tables. To the right of the patio is a large fountain that backs into a standard garden. The trickling of the water evokes a welcome wave of calmness among an otherwise bustling crowd. Ann Arborite Taylor Hulyk is a big fan of Dominick's patio during the summer. "One of the best signs that it's summer is when my friends say we're going to Dominick's," Hulyk said. "It's a welcome way to end the week – a jar of Sangria in hand, friends surrounding me...and no plans for work the next day."

Madison's Pub

15 N. Walnut - Mt. Clemens
586-468-7777

The patio at Madison's wins hands-down in the size category compared with the other six on this list. Located in the heart of downtown Mt. Clemens, the patio is a double decker and holds approximately 300 people. The patio features a four-sided covered bar, several plasma TVs, heaters and a raised stage for bands and dancing. There are several umbrella-covered tables and strings of white lights all throughout the patio. Madison's also has its own staff of in-house DJs, so you can expect music to be a big part of your experience on the patio, especially on the weekends. While Madison's is a full service restaurant, it's definitely the place to go when you want to party and dance, particularly on a warm summer night when you can spend the evening soaking up all the sights and sounds on the enormous patio.



Big Rock Chophouse

245 S. Eton - Birmingham
248-647-7774

Big Rock Chophouse was formerly the Birmingham Grand Trunk and Western Railroad Depot. This renovated restaurant is known as a trendy dining spot in Birmingham, but its patio area suits any attire, from chic to tastefully casual. The patio area takes up a generous portion of the restaurant. Large doors separate the uncovered seating from the indoor seating, which still gives you the feeling of dining outdoors without actually sitting outside. Lights are draped around the wooden architecture of the building, and leaf vines with hanging clusters of purple grapes delicately dangle from the ceiling. The atmosphere on the patio is a pristine mix of sophisticated and comfortable. Birmingham resident Erica VandenBerg has nothing but good things to say about Big Rock's patio. "Heading to Big Rock's patio is my favorite way to end the work day," she said. "The Mojito's made with fresh mint from their garden are so delicious."



Summer sneaks away from us just as quickly as it saunters in, so be sure to take advantage of the warm months by enjoying good food, drinks and company on some of metro Detroit's best patios.

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