

DINING

Bop into a local restaurant during Jazzfest

For those planning on taking in Jazzfest Thursday-Saturday, July 18-20 and want to enjoy a meal in the city of Birmingham, here are some restaurants worth visiting:

■ **220 Restaurant** — 220 Merrill, Birmingham, (248) 646-2150. Fine Italian food is the specialty at this upscale restaurant where the bar is a hot spot to see-and-be-seen and rub elbows with local celebrities. The restaurant is quiet enough and afterwards diners move to the crowded bar. A highly fashionable clientele that also visits Big Rock and posh The Corner bar at The Townsend Hotel. The 220 crowd is mixed from 20somethings to 70somethings — all fashionable. Lunch begins at 11 a.m. and the kitchen stays open until midnight on Thursdays and 1 a.m. on Fridays and Saturdays. The bar is open until last call. Walk to 220 from Jazzfest.

■ **Alban's Bottle & Basket Restaurant** — 35064 Woodward Ave., Birmingham, (248) 258-5788. A large lively, upscale bar/restaurant with a fun, sophisticated and sociable clientele. All ages of adults will feel welcome in the wooden-accented restaurant. Meals range from classic hamburgers and fresh fish to interesting chef's creations. Nice salads. Large portions. Wide range of beer, wine and drinks. Brunch every Sunday from 11 a.m. to 2 p.m. at \$12.95 for adults; \$6.95 for kids 3-10 and children under 3 eat free. Friday and Saturday: 11:30 a.m. - 11:30 a.m.

■ **Beverly Hills Grill** — 31471 Southfield Road, Beverly Hills, (248) 642-2455. A short drive from Jazzfest just minutes away. Try the crabcake eggs benedict at brunch. The grill emphasizes being vegetarian and meat-eater friendly. Try the roasted cherry tomato penne pasta offered vegetarian-style or with shrimp. Upscale California grill. Sophisticated atmosphere where any attire goes from the tuxedo-there-

ater crowd to casual-khaki shorts from passersby wanting a friendly, but not too-loud restaurant atmosphere. Alcohol available. Friday 7 a.m.-midnight; Saturday brunch from 8 a.m.-4 p.m. Dinner 4-midnight. Sunday brunch 8:30-4 p.m. Dinner 4-10 p.m.

■ **Big Rock Chop & Brew House** — 245 S. Eton, Birmingham, (248) 647-7774. A successful, trendy crowd where cosmopolitans, martini and fine beer and wine are hits. Microbrewery and outdoor patio. The bar is very popular for singles looking to mingle and couples looking for an upbeat, energetic atmosphere. Meals are classic American fare ranging from Chateau Briand with potatoes to an array of seafood and chicken creations. Thursdays is the day to see-and-be-seen. A short drive from Jazzfest off Maple Road. Hours: Thursday 11 a.m. - 11:30 p.m.; Friday: 11 a.m.-midnight; Saturday Noon-midnight and closed on Sundays.

■ **Elle's Restaurant** — 263 Pierce, Birmingham, MI 48009, (248) 647-2420. A small, very affordable restaurant literally across the street from Jazzfest with superb fast service and fresh meals. Outdoor seating available where you can listen to the music. Serving delicious authentic Middle Eastern cuisine. Attire is casual to dressy. Try the Falafel, fattoush salad and lamb dishes. Both vegetarian and carnivore-friendly. Hours are Thursdays and Fridays from 11 a.m.-10 p.m., Saturdays from 11 a.m.-10 p.m. Closed Sundays.

■ **Forte** — 201 S. Old Woodward, Birmingham, (248) 594-7300. A linen table cloths and a place for a fine, quiet dinner. This posh restaurant is great for a romantic date, or to have a quality drink and bump into area movers-and-shakers. Crowd ranges from upscale trendy to very successful, art crowd and mature socialites. Meals feature "a little bit of everything" with the boneless short ribs as a current



popular order. A short walk from Jazzfest. Lunch hours are Thursday and Friday: 11:30-2 p.m. Dinner Thursday through Saturday 5 - 11 p.m. No lunch on weekends.

■ **Fox & Hounds** — 1560 N. Woodward, Bloomfield Hills, (248) 644-4800. Maybe you're a bit more mature in age or in mind and are looking for a quiet meal at an upscale restaurant. Here the crowd is fun, but a bit more subdued than some of the other Birmingham hot spots. A mainstay in the city for years, Fox & Hounds is in walking distance of Jazzfest and features American cuisine like hardy steaks, prime rib, lobster and crab legs. Thursday and Friday lunch begins at 11 a.m. and served until 5 p.m. Dinner from 5-10 p.m.

■ **Max and Erma's** — 250 E. Merrill, Birmingham, (248) 258-1188. All ages, including the kids, will love this relatively affordable chain restaurant with great food. Salads are interesting like the

Hula Bowl with grilled pineapple, chicken and a spicy dressing. Veggie burgers, chicken dishes and rich pastas come in nice portions at this quick-service restaurant in walking distance from Jazzfest. A family-style, neat atmosphere. Lots of fruity alcohol and non-alcoholic creations. Thursdays 11-11 p.m. Fridays and Saturdays 11 a.m. to midnight for meals, bar closes at 1 a.m.

■ **Midtown Cafe** — 139 S. Old Woodward, Birmingham, (248) 642-1133. Enjoy the framed photos of celebrities on the walls of Midtown Cafe. Step into the back for a bite outside. It serves American meals like chops, seafood, steaks, personal pizzas, salmon salads, green salads. Hours open at 11:30 a.m. and kitchen is open until midnight. The bar on Fridays and Saturdays stays open until 1:30 a.m. On Thursdays the hours range but it usually closes around midnight or 1 a.m. In walking distance from Jazzfest.

Notable noshes

Magic Thai Cuisine: 297 E. Maple, Birmingham, (248) 594-5758. Fabulous authentic Thai and fabulous prices well under \$10. Try the Tofu/eggplant/green pepper dish with spicy coconut milk.

Tokyo Sushi & Grill: 225 E. Maple, Birmingham, (248) 258-6501. Greatly priced, tasty Sushi plus noodle dishes and authentic Japanese entrees. Try the chicken Katsu, Pickled relish roll or the miso soup. This cozy cafe is in walking distance from Jazzfest.

Mountain King Chinese Restaurant: 469 S. Woodward, Birmingham, (248) 644-2913. Affordable Chinese food.

Ocean Grille: 280 N. Old Woodward, Birmingham, (248) 646-7001. Upscale seafood restaurant.

Olga's Kitchen: 138 S. Old Woodward, Birmingham, (248) 647-2760. Walking distance from Jazzfest. Get the most for under \$10 here with big Olga sandwich-

es, fruit or chocolate smoothies, big salads and more. Try the grilled vegetable Olga with squash with or without chicken.

The Original Pancake House: 33703 Woodward Ave., Birmingham, (248) 642-5775. Fruit pancakes, grain pancakes and potato pancakes and more. Try the Garden Dutch Baby — a pancake with veggies and gouda cheese. A very short drive from Jazzfest.

Pita Cafe of Birmingham: 239 N. Old Woodward, Birmingham, (248) 645-6999. Great affordable authentic Middle Eastern cuisine plus fruit and veggie smoothies within walking distance of Jazzfest. Try the crushed lentil soup and Majandra plate.

Salvatore Scalloppini Italian Ristorante: 505 N. Woodward, Birmingham, MI 48009. Phone: 248-644-8977. A reasonably-priced Italian chain. Try the Pasta Del Estate with angle hair asparagus and tomatoes.

— Compiled by Lana Mini

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