

OUTSIDE DINING

FROM PAGE B1

tastes better outdoors, then several spots have appeal. Seating about 60 people, the cigar-friendly Biergarten deck at Copper Canyon Brewery in Southfield features the same menu outdoors as it does in. Popular selections include sandwiches, salads, ribs, pizza and white fish.

Rochester Mills Beer Co. in Rochester seats 50 people outdoors. Here, too, the indoor menu is served outdoors, away from Main Street traffic, auto and truck noise and gas fumes. Wheat beers and lighter styles such as Lazy Days are ordered most as are Michigan Cherry Salad, Turkey Reubens and the Cajun Salmon sandwich.

Sister operation of Rochester Mills is Royal Oak Brewery in Royal Oak. Although the menu is similar, and it too is away from Main Street Royal Oak crowds and traffic, the arbor with ceiling fans and live plants in mid-summer gives it a Euro-style feel. An outdoor bar, TV and six patio heaters for chilly evenings treat a fortunate 50 people at this popular watering hole.

Belgian Wit and Northern Lights are the frequently

ordered brews. Favorite eats with the patio crowd are Cheboygan chicken salad and Cobb salad, Hangover burger and the boneless rib sandwich with its barbecue appeal.

Doyle's Tavern in Plymouth is not a brewery, but the 38-seat patio, surrounded by a white picket fence, gets most calls for Corona, Killian's Irish Red and Labatt's Blue Light to accompany menu items in warm weather.

ITALIAN SOJOURN

Eating Italian outdoors is popular at two Plymouth eateries. Summer flower planters and tan and green umbrellas mark Compari's 30-seat patio.

The Compari salad, romaine tossed with pine nuts, crumbled blue cheese, tomatoes, bacon and a sweet and sour dressing is made for the great outdoors. A popular sandwich is grilled melanzani, eggplant with tomatoes and freshly grated parmesan on grilled Italian bread.

In the evening, Compari's regular like their cocktails and wine on the patio. They get so comfortable, it's not unusual for them to order one of the many pastas and more wine for a true evening out.

After Memorial Day, Ernesto's strings its patio lights, arranges

the planters and heaters for chilly evenings. White tablecloths give an upscale feel to the 30-seat patio. Chicken and seafood dishes are popular. Try the pollo Divinci, chicken with pasta primavera. Carafes of wine, homemade sangria and draft Bass Ale by the pitcher are popular beverages.

In addition to regular menu items both Farmington Hills and Northville locations of Tiramisu, offer an assaggi (tasting) menu from 3:30-4:30 p.m. daily on the 20-seat patio. Small plates range \$4-\$7.

Reservations for the 60 seats on the outdoor covered patio at Southfield's Il Posto are a must. The notable menu, served with the Milanese flare that has made Il Posto so popular year-round, is available for dining pleasure outdoors.

If there's not a private event scheduled, you can reserve, weather permitting, on the 35-seat patio at the award-winning Cafe Cortina in Farmington Hills. Owner Adrian Tonton assures the same superior service and Italian specialties that are served indoors.

UNIQUE SETTINGS

In its second season, the 30-seat East Patio at Sweet Georgia Brown in Detroit will again

sport flower planters, royal blue umbrellas and dishes by Executive Chef Jerry Nottage. It's a popular spot for Sunday brunch, summer salads at lunch and grilled sea bass at dinner.

Bartender Timothy Shulte is famous for his original warm weather martinis such as peach, "blueberry" and caramel apple.

Year-round, the Up North feel of Paint Creek Cider Mill & Restaurant in Rochester makes it inviting — even more so in warm-weather months when the creek is gurgling. If you can't get away for a weekend in Michigan's beautiful northern reaches, head north in Oakland County and claim a few of the 60 deck seats.

Hiking shorts and hiking outfits are welcomed attire for those using the 10-mile-long Paint Creek Trailway that runs alongside the property. Settle in and order such items as pan-seared ahi tuna or grilled salmon salad, signature items by Chef James Primeau. If you like barbecued ribs, you can eat them unmolested by mosquitoes, since electric mosquito magnets have been installed.

If you can't sleep and you live near Garden City, the patio at Garden City Cafe is open 24/7. By Memorial Day, new items including flavored coffees, cappuccino, espresso, ice cream and desserts will be added to the patio menu.

NEW THIS SEASON

When it opens sometime around May 9 in Norix Fountain Walk, the 60-seat patio at the new Bamboo Club is sure to be a hit with Pacific Rim food lovers.

Assaggi Mediterranean Bistro has a sidewalk patio accommodating 24 but designs are on the drawing board for a large one in the back to be completed by mid-to-late summer for appetizers and cocktails only. Weather permitting now, the small patio is open for Sunday brunch, a new feature at this popular Ferndale eatery.

Eleanor Heald is a nationally published writer and Troy resident who writes about restaurants, food, wine and spirits for the Observer & Eccentric. To leave her a voice mail message, dial (734) 953-2047 on a touch-tone phone, mailbox 18641.

WHERE TO EAT IN THE GREAT OUTDOORS

■ Assaggi Mediterranean Bistro - 330 W. Nine Mile, Ferndale, (248) 584-3499. Lunch and dinner Tuesday-Friday, Saturday dinner, Sunday brunch 10 a.m. to 2 p.m., dinner 4-9 p.m.

■ Bamboo Club - 44375 12 Mile (Fountain Walk), Novi, (248) 347-1006. Lunch and dinner daily after opening about May 9.

■ Big Rock Chop & Brew House - 245 S. Elton, Birmingham, (248) 647-7774. Monday-Friday 11 a.m. to 2 a.m., Saturday noon to 2 a.m.

■ Compari's - 350 S. Main St., Plymouth, (734) 416-0100.

Monday-Wednesday 11 a.m. to 11:30 p.m., Thursday-Friday until 12:30 a.m., Saturday noon to 12:30 a.m., Sunday 3-9 p.m.

■ Cafe Cortina - 30715 W. 10 Mile, Farmington Hills, (248) 474-3033. Lunch and dinner, Monday-Friday, dinner Saturday.

■ Copper Canyon Brewery - 27522 Northwestern Highway, Southfield, (248) 223-1700. Monday-Saturday 11 a.m. to midnight, Sunday 1-10 p.m.

■ Doyle's Tavern - 860 Fralick, Plymouth, (734) 207-9656. Monday-Saturday 10 a.m. to 2 a.m., Sunday noon to 2 a.m.

■ Ernesto's - 41661 Plymouth Road, Plymouth, (734) 453-2002. After Memorial Day, Monday-Saturday 4-10 p.m., Sunday 4-9 p.m.

■ Forte - 201 Old Woodward - next to the Birmingham 8 Theatre, Birmingham, (248) 594-7300. Lunch and dinner Monday-Friday, dinner Saturday.

■ Garden City Cafe - 5662 Middlebelt, Garden City, (734) 427-5338. Open 24 hours, daily.

■ Il Posto - 2910 Franklin Road at Northwestern Highway, Southfield, (248) 827-8070. Monday-Friday lunch 11:30 a.m. to 2:30 p.m., dinner Monday-Thursday 5:30-10 p.m., Friday-Saturday until 10:30 p.m.

■ Paint Creek Cider Mill & Restaurant - 4480 Orion Road, Rochester, (248) 651-8361. After Memorial Day, dinner, Tuesday-Saturday 5-10 p.m., lunch Saturday noon to 3 p.m., Sunday brunch 10 a.m. to 2 p.m., dinner 4-8 p.m.

■ Rochester Mills Beer Co. - 400 Water St., Rochester, (248) 650-5080. Monday-Wednesday 11:30 a.m. to midnight, Thursday-Saturday until 2 a.m., Sunday noon to midnight.

■ Royal Oak Brewery - 215 E. Fourth St., Royal Oak (248) 544-1141. Monday-Thursday 11:30 a.m. to midnight, Friday and Saturday until 2 a.m., Sunday noon to midnight.

■ Sand Bar - 280 N. Old Woodward, Birmingham (street level of Ocean Grille), (248) 646-1003. From end of May, Tuesday-Saturday dinner only 5-11 p.m.

■ Sweet Georgia Brown - 1045 Brush St. (at Monroe), Detroit, (313) 965-1245. Monday-Thursday 11 a.m. to 11 p.m., Friday until 1 a.m., Saturday 4 p.m. to 1 a.m., Sunday brunch 11 a.m. to 4 p.m., dinner 6-10 p.m.

■ Tiramisu - 30005 Orchard Lake Road, Farmington Hills, (248) 932-9999 and 146 Main Center St., Northville, (248) 735-0101. Monday-Thursday 11 a.m. to 10 p.m., Friday, and Saturday until 11 p.m., Sunday noon to 10 p.m.



SILVE CANTELL/STAFF PHOTOGRAPHER

Dining

Lawan Chanduang, and her husband Adirek, in the dining room of Bangkok Bistro, 1941 W. Maple, Troy, (248) 655-0222. They also own Bangkok Bistro Cafe, 5377 Crooks Road, Troy, (248) 267-9989; and Bangkok Express, 29702 Southfield Road, Southfield (248) 957-0993. The restaurants are open for lunch and dinner 11 a.m. to 9 p.m. Monday-Thursday, 11 a.m. to 10 p.m. Friday, noon to 10 p.m. Saturday, and 1-8 p.m. Sunday.

ON MY LAST SPIN... JACKPOT!

True story of a major jackpot winner!

I was enjoying a lazy Sunday afternoon playing the slots at Casino Windsor, moving from one machine to another, when a 10X machine (my favourite) had just opened up, so I sat down.

A few pulls later - and I swear it's true - on my last spin the bells started ringing like crazy and everyone started crowding around me. And there I was, suddenly \$16,000⁰⁰⁰ richer!

MORE CHANCES MADE ME A WINNER!

It occurred to me that without the exchange rate and the extra play time I got when I switched my U.S. cash to Canadian (\$100 U.S. equaled about \$160 CDN.), I wouldn't have won that jackpot. The extra chances to win made me a winner!

So yes, I love Casino Windsor for the incredible warmth and friendliness of the people there. And the extra play time can make a big difference too!

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Must be 19 years of age or older to enter. Based on exchange rate.
20 percent of profits will be donated to charity.