

Readers weigh in on outdoor dining



The Enquirer / Jeff Swinger

Warner's Restaurant in Fort Thomas is an English Tudor home with intimate dining rooms, a patio with umbrella tables and seating for 100.

By Jim Knippenberg

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No question about it, people in Greater Cincinnati and Northern Kentucky love their outdoor dining.

And music. And drinking. And happy-hour socializing.

The Enquirer discovered that after a June 21 story suggested a host of local alfresco favorites and then asked readers to send in their recommendations.

Of 243 e-mails, we received 18 workable suggestions for prime outdoor drinking and dining spots. Some were eliminated because of distance, some were eliminated because two tables crammed onto a sidewalk don't qualify, and one was eliminated because it's closed.

Eleven others made the cut. But get there soon, because outdoor dining season generally folds up its umbrella tables in late September or early October.

INSIDE

Where do readers like to dine alfresco? Find out, **D6**.

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FROM THE COVER



Enquirer file photos

Mecklenburg Gardens in Corryville sits under a 100-year-old grape arbor, full of academic types, YPs and neighborhood regulars.

Places to dine under the stars

By Jim Knippenberg

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Thinking of heading out for an after-work cocktail in the great outdoors? Or a burger with a big plate of greasy onion rings? Try some of these places, as suggested by you, the readers:

Arnold's Bar and Grill, 210 E. Eighth St., downtown

The look: The shaded, walled garden is a secluded haven for downtown workers.

The sound: Jazz, blues, Americana bands Thursday, Friday and Saturday.

Known for: Greek spaghetti, topped with feta cheese.

Information: 513-421-6234

Back Porch Saloon, 9626 Princeton-Glendale Road, West Chester Township

The look: Screened-in porch, patio, deck, volleyball and corn-hole courts.

The sound: Music around the tiki bar Sunday.

Known for: Homemade deviled eggs, wings and quesadillas.

Information: 513-874-2432

Cabana on the River, 7445 Forbes Road, Fernbank

The look: A sprawling patio on the edge of the Ohio River seats about 250. Popular with West Siders, it fills early with families and softball teams.

The sound: Toots from passing boats.

Known for: Steak burgers and Italian hoagies.

Information: 513-941-7442

Chez Nora, 530 Main St., Covington

The look: Street level sidewalk seating under umbrella tables, third-floor seating on the roof, popular with young professionals and jazz lovers.

The sound: Entertainment Thursday through Sunday, usually jazz.

Known for: \$4 Absolut martinis Thursdays; hearty appetizer trays.

Information: 859-491-8027

Cock and Bull English Pub, 601 Main St., Covington

The look: YPs, college students and neighborhood types; street-side umbrella tables.

The sound: Bands, DJs on Tuesday, Friday and Saturday

Known for: Extensive list of imported beers, fish 'n' chips, a

menu that runs until midnight

Drew's River Saloon, 4333 River Road, Riverside

The look: Standing next to Anderson Ferry, it's bright with a lot of neon, huge deck/tiki bar, boaters and West Siders.

The sound: Classic rock on weekends.

Known for: Frozen drinks, especially the Banana Jammer; fish sandwich.

Information: 513-451-1157

Mecklenburg Gardens, 302 E. University Ave., Corryville

The look: The long, skinny garden sits under a 100-year-old grape arbor, full of UC types, YPs, neighborhood regulars and tourists armed with guide books directing them to an oompah fix.

The sound: Music Wednesday, Friday, Saturday and many times on Thursday.

Known for: Beer - 35 imported brands - and German food

Information: 513-221-5353

Par's Place, 6126 Winton Road, Fairfield

The look: Lushly landscaped outdoor area - seating for about 40 - gives an intimate feel.

The sound: More than 20 TVs, most tuned to sports.

Known for: Blackened tuna and 10 variations on wings.

Information: 513-829-3773

River Watch, 1 Walnut St., Lawrenceburg

The look: A barge with indoor and outdoor seating for more than 200, mostly families, neighborhood types and boaters, but with a dose of out-of-state visitors.

The sound: Weekend entertainment on the deck, mostly rock 'n' roll.

Known for: The rivertini, black Angus burgers and rib-eye steak sandwiches.

Information: 812-539-3625

The Pavilion, 949 Pavilion St., Mount Adams

The look: It's the ultimate party - over view - with four decks overlooking the skyline; young-ish crowd with a lot of neighbors.

The sound: Rock 'n' roll (bands, DJs, depending on which level you select) Wednesday-Saturday.

Known for: Appetizers (wings, spinach and artichoke dip, quesadillas and nachos), burgers.

Information: 513-744-9200

Warner's Restaurant, 15 N. Fort Thomas Ave., Fort Thomas

The look: English Tudor home with intimate dining rooms, patio with umbrella tables and seating for 100.

The sound: Bands of all sorts, acoustic, blues, solo, Friday and Saturday.

Known for: \$2 martinis, signature dish of red grouper, served beer-battered or grilled.

Information: 859-442-4400



Chez Nora in Covington has sidewalk seating and a third-floor rooftop patio.