

..... (Cinema is big in Bloomington, with copious venues to view film) .....

# THE BIG SCREENS

BY CHRIS LYNCH

*Movies are an integral part of Bloomington's arts scene, and the arts are part of what makes Bloomington what it is. Sure, there are movieplexes where you can take in the hottest new releases. But the city is also home to unique venues and festivals that offer a more personalized experience that you won't find anywhere else.*



# IU CINEMA

Having a top-notch research university in Bloomington adds an extraordinary dimension to the movie-going experience. The university created a new media school which combines traditional journalism with a variety of other types of communication forms, including filmmaking. The campus also refurbished an old theater to create one of the most beautiful cinemas in the Midwest. The IU Cinema hosts an open-to-the-public series of films each year in which they screen everything from historically significant films to Hollywood blockbusters, independent art movies, and contemporary international films. Associate Director Brittany Friesner says, "Being on the IU Bloomington campus affords us the ability to engage world-renowned scholars and filmmakers in our programming. Community members and students alike have the opportunity to experience unparalleled access to some of the greatest thinkers and artists in the world through attending one of our Jorgensen Guest Filmmaker Lectures or by participating in a post-film Q&A at IU Cinema."

IU Cinema coordinates about half of its films with academic departments, student groups, and community organizations, and 2016 will prove to have many interesting collaborations. Friesner says, "We are very excited in 2016 to support numerous international film festivals

and conferences, including Intersectionality: IU Latina Film Festival and Conference, the Seventh Annual New Trends in Contemporary Italian Cinema, and several two-day conferences supporting the new Center for Documentary Research and Practice at the Media School at IU."

This year is also IU Cinema's fifth anniversary. Asked about special events that are in the works, Friesner singled out a personal favorite: "One of the highlights of this year will be the premiere of a new orchestral score commissioned from a student composer in the Jacobs School of Music for the 1916 film *The Return of Draw Egan*. The film will be screened with live musical accompaniment by a student orchestra as part of the inaugural Jon Vickers Film Scoring Award."

*The IU Cinema will take a break in the summer of 2016 for renovations, but will be back in action by late August.*



THE IU CINEMA IS LOCATED IN THE HEART OF THE BEAUTIFUL IU CAMPUS.

SUNDAY NIGHT FILM SCREENINGS ARE HELD AT BEAR'S PLACE, A COZY BAR NEAR THE IU CAMPUS.

# THE RYDER



"BREATHE, FROM FRANCE, HAS WON AWARDS ON THE FESTIVAL CIRCUIT AND IS BEING SCREENED IN THE RYDER SERIES IN JANUARY.



"HIGH DIVING GIRAFFES" IS PART OF THE CHILDREN'S INTERNATIONAL FILM FESTIVAL SPONSORED ANNUALLY BY THE RYDER.



GEMMA BOVERI IS A CLEVER UPDATING OF THE CLASSIC NOVEL BY FLAUBERT.

Of course, film was part of the Bloomington culture well before the IU Cinema opened, with the Ryder Film Series bringing international and independent films to the area for more than 25 years. The series features mainly first-run films from around the world. Series founder Peter LoPilato explains, "Many of these are low-budget films, at least by Hollywood standards. But what they lack in financing they more than make up for in creativity, enthusiasm and vision." This year the series will feature films from France, Germany, Russia, Mexico, Israel, Norway, and Afghanistan.

The Ryder's screenings are held at different locations around town. Films are screened primarily in the two IU Fine Arts theaters and in the Woodburn Hall theater on the IU campus. They also screen films on Sunday nights at Bear's Place, and, on occasion, at the Buskirk-Chumley Theater.

Most of these locations are pretty conventional screening venues, but Bear's Place – a restaurant and bar – stands out. LoPilato started the series at Bear's, and he recalls that in the early days it was difficult to convince distributors that it was a viable venue. "When we first started programming foreign-language films, the distributors found it hard to believe that we were screening them in a bar. And in one or two cases, they were horrified at the very thought and initially would not work with us. They assumed that a bar audience would be inattentive, if not rowdy and out of control. Our audiences at Bear's Place were anything but. Bear's would sell more salads during movies than they would beer." Luckily distributors caught on, and Bear's continues to offer a one-of-a-kind movie-going experience.



# PRIDE FILM FESTIVAL

Since its founding in 2003, the PRIDE Film Festival has focused on presenting films that explore a variety of issues facing the queer community. According to director Sarah Perfetti, the event screens "films from all over the world that have queer characters and content, or are produced by queer filmmakers." The movies include feature-length films as well as shorts, and although "the top three genres preferred by our audience are comedies, dramas, and documentaries," Perfetti points out, "people also like animated and science fiction, so we throw a few of those in too."

The PRIDE Film Festival sponsors live performances, lectures, and other public participation events alongside its screenings. Perfetti says that these events "express a wide range of viewpoints, feature many different personality types and situations, and advocate community-wide attitudes of awareness, acceptance, and appreciation of diversity." This year's festival, which will be held from January 28-30, will include a screening of a film geared toward youth that will also have a participatory educational component about advocating for and supporting young members of the queer community.



UNIQUE LIVE PERFORMANCES AND OTHER COMMUNITY PROJECTS HAVE TIME TO SHINE AT THE PRIDE FILM FESTIVAL.



ATTENDEES AWAIT THE NEXT FILM IN THE BUSKIRK-CHUMLEY THEATER, BLOOMINGTON'S OLDEST CINEMA.



## MIDDLE COAST



THE RED CARPET EXPERIENCE.  
[PHOTO BY KYLIE CISNEY]



FILMMAKERS SHARE THEIR EXPERIENCES WITH THE AUDIENCE.  
[PHOTO BY BENEDICT JONES]

The Middle Coast Film Festival is a newer addition to Bloomington's movie scene. Having just completed its second season, festival director Jessica Levandoski is already looking forward to season three in July 2016. "The mission of the Middle Coast Film Festival is super simple," she says. "We want to create a destination international film festival right here in Bloomington that focuses on the interactive elements of the film industry. We want our filmmakers and our audiences to have access to one another in a laid-back environment. We have programming that rivals what is being screened on the coasts and in bigger cities."

With the Middle Coast Film Festival, Levandoski doesn't want to just introduce Bloomington to great films; she also seeks to introduce great filmmakers to Bloomington. All of the filmmakers - whether they're just getting started or are headlining the event - are invited to introduce their films and participate in question-and-answer sessions with the audience. Levandoski says, "We bring in all the visiting filmmakers, actors, and producers and make sure they are shown a great time. In return, these filmmakers are enticed to shoot their next projects here in town, or spread the love to their colleagues."

*From fine art films to Hollywood classics and everything in between, Bloomington offers some spectacular film viewing opportunities in unique theaters, including some places that aren't theaters at all. So settle in and enjoy the show.*

## LEARN MORE

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### IU CINEMA

[cinema.indiana.edu](http://cinema.indiana.edu)



### THE RYDER

[theryder.com](http://theryder.com)



### PRIDE FILM FESTIVAL

[bloomingtonpride.org](http://bloomingtonpride.org)



### MIDDLE COAST FILM FESTIVAL

[middlecoastfest.com](http://middlecoastfest.com)



MOVIES IN THE PARK  
[PHOTO BY GREG JACOBS]



..... (Some of the best places for craft cocktails) .....

# I'LL DRINK TO THAT

*Where do the grown-ups drink in our college town? There's a whole world beyond well drinks and pitchers of beer. Here are the best bars in Bloomington for fantastic cocktails.*

BY ERICA SAGON

## UPTOWN CAFÉ

It's hard to imagine Bloomington without this cocktail spot — it feels like such an icon, and yet, the bar side has only been around for five years. It was an expansion of the Uptown Café, the long-time Creole- and Cajun-inspired restaurant just off the square. This stately bar shakes and stirs classic cocktails plus specialty drinks thought up by the expert bar crew. If you have the chance, sit right at the bar and soak in this lively place.



**WHAT TO ORDER:** You can't go wrong with the venerable House Sazerac.

**INSTAGRAM THIS:** An enviable weekend brunch — a Bloody Mary, coffee, eggs benedict, and cinnamon roll coffee cake.

**SNACK ON:** Artichoke and kalamata olive dip always hits the spot.

[the-uptown.com](http://the-uptown.com)

## CARDINAL SPIRITS

Bloomington's craft distillery makes premium, small-batch spirits like vodka, gin, rum, and botanical liqueurs in one room. In the next room over, it serves them in creative cocktails in a clean-lined, modern bar. Cocktails don't get more local than this. A mile south of downtown, its spacious patio overlooking the B-Line walking and biking trail offers spectacular people watching.



**WHAT TO ORDER:** The smooth Café à l'Orange, made with Songbird Craft Coffee Liqueur and a misting of orange oil, will make you wonder where the outstanding combo of coffee and orange has been all your life.

**INSTAGRAM THIS:** While taking a tour of the distillery, post pics of the giant copper still and barrels of bourbon.

**SNACK ON:** A charcuterie plate, or carry in chorizo nachos from the taco truck stationed in the parking lot.

[cardinalspirits.com](http://cardinalspirits.com)

*Russell loves that dogs are allowed on the Cardinal Spirits patio. Check out [#BtownBeagle](https://www.instagram.com/BtownBeagle) on Instagram for more adventures.*

## C3

This swanky take on a neighborhood bar is off the beaten path on the city's southeast side, and seemingly worlds away from the bustle on Kirkwood. Its stylish cocktails combine craft spirits with fun ingredients that you probably wouldn't go through the trouble to make at home. C3 isn't overly fixated on whiskey like a lot of craft cocktail bars — refreshingly, it gives equal weight to all spirits.



**WHAT TO ORDER:** Scan the ever-changing menu for one-of-a-kind cocktails with house-infused ingredients — like roasted peanut-infused bourbon and tea-infused dry vermouth.

**INSTAGRAM THIS:** Beer cocktails! Just as thoughtfully constructed as the rest of the menu.

**SNACK ON:** Treat yourself to upscale snacks like ceviche and salt-and-pepper kale chips.

[c3bloomington.com](http://c3bloomington.com)

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## MALIBU GRILL

If you're an IU alum, you might remember Malibu as the fancy restaurant where you went with a date or with your parents when they were in town. It's time for a revisit to this timeless restaurant and bar on the Square, whose cocktail menu has only grown more focused, sophisticated, and intriguing over the years — just like you. A handful of big TVs means you can catch the game, too.



**WHAT TO ORDER:** A well-made classic, like a Manhattan.

**INSTAGRAM THIS:** The off-the-menu Deantini — Grey Goose vodka on the rocks with two bleu cheese-stuffed olives and a lemon twist — named after Dean Kleinschmidt, a Malibu regular for years and years, and a former head athletic trainer for Indiana University's football team.

**SNACK ON:** The seared rare yellowfin tuna with Sriracha is the way to kick off happy hour.

[malibugrill.net](http://malibugrill.net)

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## FARMBLOOMINGTON

People go to FARM just off the Square for food that feels familiar, but executed with an intriguing twist; the same goes for its cocktails, too. Whether it's a paloma, negroni, or mai tai, it's surely got that FARM flourish that makes it unique. If after a drink or two you feel like a change of scenery, you won't have to go far: The Root Cellar is a funky speakeasy in the basement.



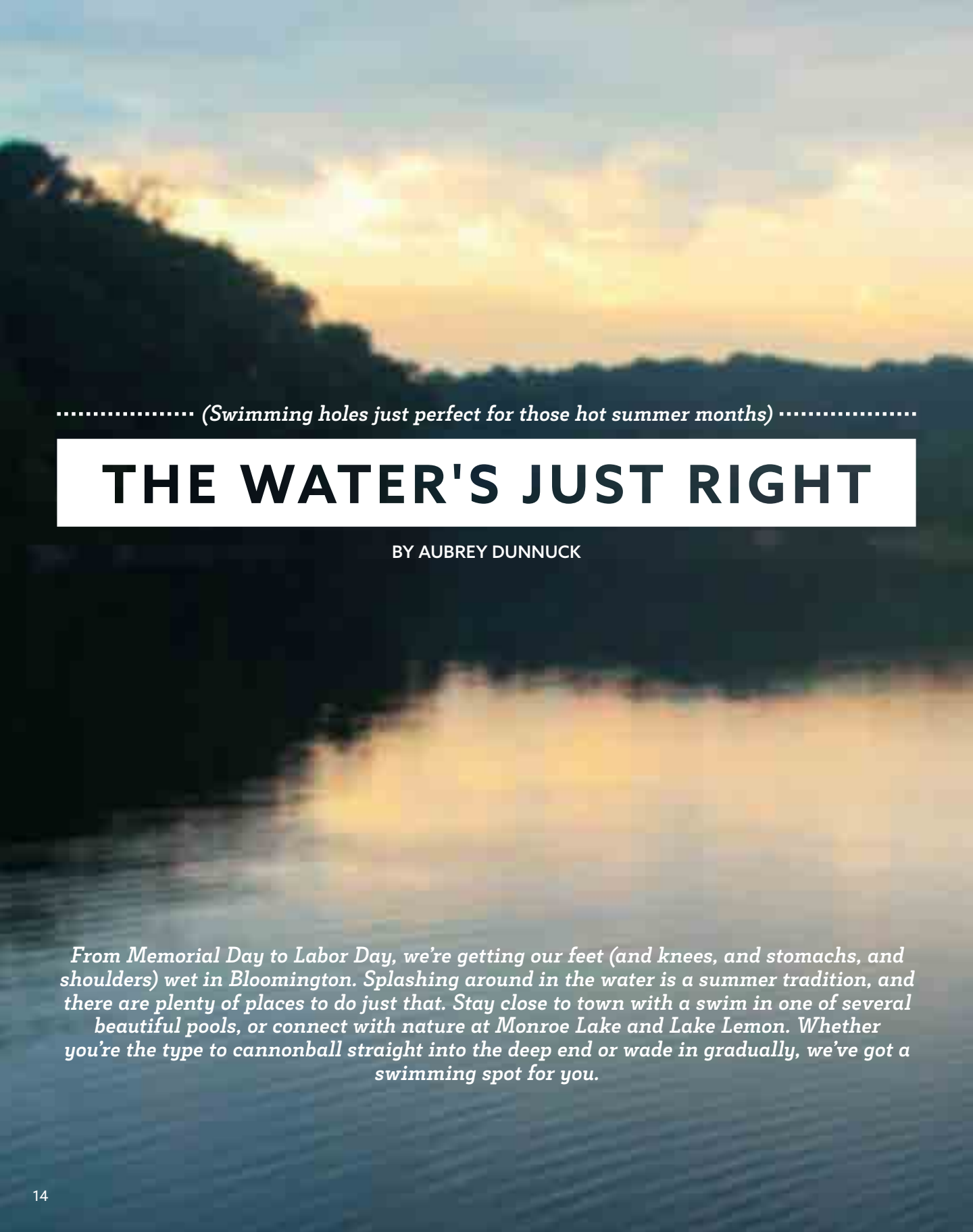
**WHAT TO ORDER:** Something that gets you out of your comfort zone. Maybe a port-wine-and-rye cocktail or a shrub, which is a tart drinking vinegar sweetened with fruit.

**INSTAGRAM THIS:** The bedpan collection hanging on the wall outside the restrooms. It's no cocktail, but it's the perfect "I was here" snapshot.

**SNACK ON:** A giant bowl of legendary garlic fries with parmesan, chili flakes, and lemon zest.

[farm-bloomington.com](http://farm-bloomington.com)





..... (Swimming holes just perfect for those hot summer months) .....

# THE WATER'S JUST RIGHT

BY AUBREY DUNNUCK

*From Memorial Day to Labor Day, we're getting our feet (and knees, and stomachs, and shoulders) wet in Bloomington. Splashing around in the water is a summer tradition, and there are plenty of places to do just that. Stay close to town with a swim in one of several beautiful pools, or connect with nature at Monroe Lake and Lake Lemon. Whether you're the type to cannonball straight into the deep end or wade in gradually, we've got a swimming spot for you.*

## BRYAN PARK POOL

Talk about kid appeal – with three water slides and a shallow splash area for the tots, Bryan Park Pool is hard to beat. Luckily there’s a snack bar on site, because a hungry tummy might just be the only thing to tear your kids away from the fun. 1001 S. Henderson St.

## MILLS POOL

On a smaller scale than Bryan Park Pool, Mills Pool is also a great choice for families. There’s something for every age – a water slide for big kids, a zero-depth area for little ones, plus umbrellas and deck chairs for lounging parents. 1100 W. 14th St.



KARST FARM PARK SPLASH PAD

## KARST FARM PARK

If you’re looking to cool off but don’t need the full pool experience, head out to the Splash Pad, located behind the soccer fields at Karst Farm Park. The fountains and sprinklers are a welcome respite from a long day of activities. There’s also a great playground next to the water area. Best of all: it’s all free! 2450 S. Endwright Rd.

## COUNSILMAN BILLINGSLEY AQUATIC CENTER

While some of us may wish for 365 days of summer, four distinct seasons in Bloomington means the outdoor pools have to close when the cool weather arrives. So if you’re itching to jump in the pool and the weather isn’t cooperating, try the state-of-the-art pool at IU’s Student Recreational Sports Center. Call or check for family swim hours on weekends. 1601 Law Ln.



IU OUTDOOR POOL

## IU OUTDOOR POOL

Looking to get your laps in? The IU Outdoor Pool has 10 lanes dedicated to staying between the lines. There’s a shallow pool for kids, spring diving boards, and a multi-story diving platform that might just inspire a few dares. Are you brave enough to jump off the 10-meter platform? 1833 N. Fee Ln.



MONROE LAKE

## PAYNETOWN STATE RECREATION AREA (MONROE LAKE)

Monroe Lake is the largest in Indiana, snaking its way through the southeast corner of the county. Surrounded by thousands of acres of gorgeous forest, the lake is home to three beaches. First up is Paynetown Beach, situated in the middle of a sunny peninsula and full of rustic charm. There are also lots of rentable boats to get you out onto the water, from kayaks to jet skis to double decker pontoon boats. If you want to participate in some land-based happenings, the activity center hosts programming throughout the year. 4850 S. State Road 446

## HARDIN RIDGE RECREATION AREA (MONROE LAKE)

For a more secluded swimming spot, head south to the scenic Hardin Ridge Recreation Area, part of the Hoosier National Forest. The picturesque beach offers 300 feet of swimming real estate, plus a grassy shaded area that's great for picnics.  
*6464 Hardin Ridge Rd.*

## FAIRFAX STATE RECREATION AREA (MONROE LAKE)

Across the lake (or around it, if you're driving) you'll find the biggest beach of the bunch at Fairfax State Recreation Area. Get your daily dose of vitamin D on its sandy shores or rent a boat from the Fourwinds Lakeside Inn and Marina to spend the day cruising the lake.  
*9301 S. Fairfax Rd.*



## RIDDLE POINT PARK (LAKE LEMON)

The beach at Riddle Point Park, part of the Lake Lemon Conservancy District, is a lovely alternative to popular Monroe Lake. Plan the perfect day with a morning hike on the Tulip Trace Nature Trail, a picnic lunch, then swimming and sunbathing at the beach.  
*7599 N. Tunnel Rd.*



BLOOMINGTON IS A BEAUTIFUL PLACE,  
BUT DON'T TAKE OUR WORD FOR IT.

# #VISITBTOWN

Check out these Instagram photos from locals, students, and visitors who shared them with us by using the **#visitbtown** hashtag. Follow **@visitbtown** to see more and tag your own photos too.





.... (Monasteries and monks that made their home in this college town) ....

# BUDDHISTS IN BLOOMINGTON

BY ERICA SAGON



TIBETAN MONGOLIAN BUDDHIST CULTURAL CENTER

One of the best things about Bloomington is the diversity of people who come here, and the reasons why. It might surprise visitors to know that two of the largest Buddhist centers in the Midwest are right here in Bloomington. Tucked away in heavy woods that act as a buffer from the outside world, the spiritual centers are places where people can marvel or meditate, or both. These centers are part of the fabric that makes this community so colorful, and offer visitors a unique and unexpected experience.

You don't have to be a practicing Buddhist to explore these quiet and sacred monasteries. Their brightly colored temples, altars with gilded Buddha statues, and peaceful grounds are open to the public. Both centers welcome visitors of all faiths who are looking for a cultural experience or simply a few tranquil moments.

The longstanding Tibetan Mongolian Buddhist Cultural Center is on the southeast side of Bloomington, and the newer Gaden KhachoeShing monastery is on Bloomington's north side. Both monasteries have four resident monks who chant and pray daily in the temples.

*“For visitors, we just want them to be able to see something different.”*

Both centers were established to preserve Buddhism in Western culture and both are rooted in the Yellow Hat sect of Tibetan Buddhism, but their practices veer from there — the two are not affiliated. Here's what to expect when visiting these Bloomington landmarks.

At the Tibetan Mongolian Buddhist Cultural Center, a winding drive seems to offer something new at every turn: monuments, the temple, a prayer-wheel pavilion, a pond with lotus flowers, and cottages for rent. Set back on a heavily wooded 108 acres — just 10 acres of which are developed — the center hosts individual visitors looking for meditation as well as large events, including a handful of visits from the Dalai Lama (he even has a private apartment at the Center for those visits).

The Center was founded in the 1970s by the late Thubten Jigme Norbu, the eldest brother of the 14th Dalai Lama and a professor of Tibetan Studies at Indiana University. Today, the Center's director is Arjia Rinpoche, who fled Tibet and wrote a memoir about it called "Surviving the Dragon." Rinpoche was recognized as a reincarnate lama when he was two years old and he was tapped by the Dalai Lama to become the director in 2005.

The center promotes diversity and interfaith prayer, which is why a Bible and Koran are on display in the temple, says Chenli Reije, the Center's manager and nephew of the Center's director. Yoga, meditation classes, and Sunday morning prayer are some of the ways the Center engages the community.

Reije says he hopes that visitors enjoy seeing a different perspective at the Center.

"In Buddhism, one of the main teachings is not having attachment. Life is impermanent," Reije says. "[People] usually look for guidance from Buddhist teachings to break their rituals and look at the bigger picture. For visitors, we just want them to be able to see something different."

Past the temple, visitors will find a lotus pond, cottages nestled in the woods, and an outdoor teaching pavilion, which was used by the Dalai Lama on his visits to the Center. The renovated cottages resemble traditional Mongolian yurts but with the comforts of home. They have air conditioning and heating, electricity, plumbing, and kitchenettes, and go for around \$100 a night. They're often rented out for spiritual retreats, but they also fill up on busy weekends in Bloomington as an alternative to a hotel, Reije says.

Also on the grounds are two tall, striking monuments known as stupas, whose simplified shapes are said to represent Buddha. There's also a structure that houses a prayer wheel — giving it a spin clockwise is the equivalent of saying hundreds of thousands of prayers at once. There's even a gift shop in the community building, which offers Tibetan items including necklaces, slippers, and books.

In addition to retreats and classes, the Center hosts celebrations for Buddha's birthday in the spring, the Dalai Lama's birthday in the summer, and the Tibetan new year in late winter or early spring.

Meanwhile, at Gaden KhachoeShing monastery, about seven miles north of downtown Bloomington, the temple features

a grand, gilded 32-foot-tall statue, one of the largest anywhere outside of Tibet, says Jamyang Lama, a resident monk and co-founder of the monastery.

The temple may be new — it opened in fall 2014 — but the monastery was founded in Bloomington in 1996 in a different location. Set on 128 acres in the woods and at the end of an unpaved road, Gaden KhachoeShing feels remote. A clearing gives way to a large three-

“*Coming here is a spiritual destination.*”

GADEN KHACHOESHING





story building that houses the temple, living space for the monks, and a large dining hall and kitchen used for retreats and celebrations. Annual events include the Tibetan New Year and Taste of Tibet, a feast of traditional foods like momos (dumplings) and teas.

Many features of the temple were imported from Nepal, Lama says, including the ornate doorknobs on the entrance and the three gilded statues on the altar that represent past, present, and future Buddhas. The space is made incredibly vibrant by colorful tapestries and paintings, brightened with natural light.

The temple is used daily by the resident monks, but also for retreats, classes, and gatherings for visiting teachers from around the world. "Coming here is a spiritual destination," Jamyang Lama says. "It is a place where people can be contemplative and ultimately inspired to become a Buddha."

The center welcomes people of all faiths to talk with monks and students, or simply to practice silence, he says. "Some just want to come here to gain some peace in their mind," Lama says. "We are here for everyone."

The temple was built with eco-friendly features like LED lighting, low-flow faucets, and rainwater harvesting.

## IF YOU GO

Both centers welcome visitors of all faiths. Gaden KhachoeShing asks that visitors call ahead; the Tibetan Mongolian Buddhist Cultural Center is open daily, 10 a.m.-5 p.m., and large groups should call ahead.

A few pointers on etiquette at the temples: Take off your shoes and place them in the cubbies/racks provided before entering — shoes are removed to keep the spiritual space clean and to symbolically leave negative thoughts behind. Don't touch statues, tapestries, or paintings. It's absolutely okay to take pictures, talk with the monks, and ask questions.

"You don't have to be a Buddhist to come here and talk to one of our monks," says Reije, "We are everyday people."

### **Tibetan Mongolian Buddhist Cultural Center**

3655 Snoddy Road  
Bloomington, IN 47401  
812-336-6807 • [tmbcc.org](http://tmbcc.org)

### **Gaden KhachoeShing**

2150 E. Dolan Road  
Bloomington, IN 47408  
812-334-3456 • [gaden.org](http://gaden.org)





..... (Ten of Bloomington's favorite vegetarian and vegan restaurants) .....

# EAT YOUR VEGETABLES

BY AUBREY DUNNUCK

*If you're a vegetarian visiting Bloomington, consider yourself lucky. From the plethora of earth-conscious restaurants surrounding the downtown square to the abundance of unique international restaurants on Fourth Street, a delicious, meat-free meal is easy to find and devour. And we're not just vegetarian friendly; if you're vegan or gluten-free, you'll find more delectable options than you'd expect even from a progressive place like Bloomington. These locally owned and operated restaurants are just a few of our favorites.*



THE OWLERY

### THE OWLERY

This meat-free restaurant on the Square stands out as much for its collection of owl kitsch as for its all-vegetarian comfort food. You must try the Canadian classic, Poutine. Crispy fries smothered in hot gravy and melted cheese curds (vegan or dairy), need we say more? [theowleryrestaurant.com](http://theowleryrestaurant.com)

### ANYETSANG'S LITTLE TIBET

Follow the colorful Tibetan Prayer flags to find this Fourth Street gem. Share some Tibetan dumplings, or momos, with half Tsel, stuffed with cabbage and carrots and half Shogo, filled with mashed potatoes and onions. Lunch specials are a great deal – they include a small salad with an addictive ginger dressing, followed by the ultra-creamy coconut red curry. [anyetsangs.com](http://anyetsangs.com)



KING DOUGH

### FALAFELS

The namesake Falafel is excellent – fresh and plenty crisp. Order it in a sandwich with some of the best fries in Bloomington or as an entrée with roasted asparagus and mashed potatoes. On the healthier side, the Tel Aviv Salad is a rainbow of cucumber, tomatoes, olives, and feta. Use the halo of pita chips to scoop up a little bit of everything. [falafelonline.com](http://falafelonline.com)

### KING DOUGH

A new – and very welcome – addition to the downtown square, King Dough brings Napoli-style pizza to Bloomington. You can't go wrong with a classic Margherita pie, topped with tomato sauce, mozzarella, extra virgin olive oil, and basil. The crust stands on its own, beautifully charred and chewy, making it easy to skip the cheese and go with a vegan pie. [facebook.com/kingdoughpizza](https://facebook.com/kingdoughpizza)



RAINBOW BAKERY  
[INBLOOM PHOTOGRAPHY]

## SAMIRA

You can't find Afghan cuisine everywhere, but you can find it in Bloomington at Samira. Here, every meal starts with a complimentary appetizer of garlicky grilled eggplant and carrots, so good that you might want to order a whole plate. Meatless highlights include the vegetarian Aushak and Manto dumplings and the Badenjan, silky baked eggplant topped with tomato sauce and spiced yogurt. [samirarestaurant.com](http://samirarestaurant.com)

## RAINBOW BAKERY

Walking into Rainbow Bakery might feel like you've entered a retro 1960s bakery, until you notice the vegan and gluten-free goodies like Fauxstess cupcakes and caramel almond crunch donuts. The delightful baked goods are so beautiful that it's almost impossible to choose just one. Everything is vegan, with plenty of gluten-free options, too. [rainbowbakery.net](http://rainbowbakery.net)



MY THAI CAFÉ

## MY THAI CAFÉ

There are several good Thai options in Bloomington, and My Thai Café is one of the best. Start with the spring rolls, packed with fresh herbs like mint and cilantro. Follow up with an order of Drunken Man Fried Rice, full of garlic and basil, or the Tofu Pad Prig Khing, a rich coconut-less curry paste flavored with kaffir lime leaves. [mythaicafeusa.com](http://mythaicafeusa.com)

## LAUGHING PLANET

Located right in the heart of downtown, Laughing Planet is a great place to chill with a fresh and casual meal on the patio. A good vegetarian meal is all about balance, and the Laughing Planet gets it just right with their healthy Classic Burrito, Veggie Chili, and Highway to Kale salad. Plus, you can replace the meat in any dish with tofu or seitan. [thelaughingplanetcafe.com](http://thelaughingplanetcafe.com)

## RUNCIBLE SPOON

From the mismatched coffee mugs to the koi fish in the bathtub, brunch at the Runcible Spoon is truly a taste of Bloomington. There are pancakes of course, made even more delectable with a handful of blueberries, if you please. Or go for the savory Veggie Bennie: two poached eggs with spinach, tomato, and plenty of creamy hollandaise. Go carb crazy with a side of seasoned home fries. [runciblespoonrestaurant.com](http://runciblespoonrestaurant.com)

## FOOD TRUCK FRIDAY

A little of this, a little of that: the best way to experience a Food Truck Friday is to try everything! Have a tamale from The Tamale Cart, maybe roasted red pepper or creamy sweet potato and goat cheese. Wash it down with a fizzy gourmet pop from Bea's Soda Bar. Then hit up Lochwood Kitchen for a vegan option, like a Grits Cake topped with green apple mint salsa. And you can't leave without a frozen treat from the host of Food Truck Friday, The Chocolate Moose!

FOOD TRUCK FRIDAY



..... (Meet the people who build, paint, print, and create in Bloomington) .....

# BEHIND THE ART

BY ERICA SAGON  
[PHOTOS BY ANDREW GRODNER]

*Bloomington's art scene is bursting with talent and energy in every medium you can think of. It's a community where you'll find everything from engaging public art to edgy pieces from local artists hanging on the walls of restaurants and bars. Several eclectic galleries and pop-up events that dot the city's walkable downtown give artists a place to showcase their work and a place for locals and visitors to take it all in.*

*The scene is made even more dynamic by the people who flow in and out of Indiana University's top-notch arts programs – many of whom end up*

*sticking around to do what they love most. Artists themselves describe their home base as overflowing with inspiration, character, and camaraderie.*

*"Bloomington is an amazingly supportive community for creating art and making a career as a working artist," says Bloomington fiber artist Martina Celerin. "Art is valued in this community, and people who create art are appreciated and respected for their contribution to our society." From emerging artists to established ones, here's a look at a few of the people who make the city's scene so remarkable.*



## MICHAEL FINGER

*fine art photographer*

[michaelfingerphotography.squarespace.com](http://michaelfingerphotography.squarespace.com)

Living and photographing here for 25 years, Finger has certainly found a muse in Bloomington, but not in the polished way that you might expect. His large, striking black-and-white prints capture forgotten industrial architecture and related debris encountered by poking around landmarks like the Woolery Stone Mill and Johnson's Creamery. He seeks out ragged rubble, abandoned mechanical equipment, and peeling paint.

"I'm sort of trespassing in a very benign way a lot," Finger says of finding his subjects. "I'll start looking closely at something that you'd normally walk past and not notice."

Finger has an old-school approach with a modern spin. He takes photos with a large-format film camera and develops the 4-by-5-inch negatives in a darkroom, then scans the negatives and tinkers with the digital files in Photoshop. The goal is to get the image as sharp and detailed as possible, he says. More than 20 of his prints documenting the once-abandoned Johnson's Creamery site now hang in the renovated building downtown.



## ELIZABETH BUSEY

*printmaker*

[elizabethbusey.com](http://elizabethbusey.com)

For her vibrant take on patterns in nature, Busey sometimes zooms way in — say, vessels and veins of plant parts — and sometimes she zooms way out, taking a bird's-eye views of fields and streams.

Each of her mesmerizing linocut prints is created using a single linoleum block which is carved away in stages. At each stage, ink is rolled onto the block and then printed on paper, meaning a piece has six to 10 meticulously planned layers of ink.

"I am constantly surprised when a new color layer completely changes the effect of the image," Busey says. "And because I use both transparent and opaque inks, I am always creating unexpected new colors that I could not have imagined myself."

The one color she won't use? Black. "I am always trying to create some kind of depth in my work, and I find that black flattens the work. Instead I use purples for the darkest parts of the prints."



## DREW ETIENNE

*painter*

[drewetienne.com](http://drewetienne.com)

Etienne's pieces aren't traditional landscape art — he depicts surreal and abstract places, after all — but you get the strange sense that each one is a snapshot of a larger world that he knows well. Etienne, who earned his bachelor of fine arts at Indiana University, says his work is guided by mystery, exploration, and discovery.

"Video games had a huge influence on me when I was a kid," Etienne says. "It was my first and most impactful introduction to imaginary worlds. I was enthralled by the bright colors and mysterious other-worldly settings. I think to this day it was the biggest influence on my desire to create my own worlds."

Etienne says the video games can be seen in his use of vivid colors, obsessive exactness, and complex shapes made out of simple polygons. And, perhaps a nod to growing up in the Appalachian region and hiking, his paintings often splice digital elements like geometric structures into lush forests and valleys.



## MARTINA CELERIN

*fiber artist*

[martinacelerin.com](http://martinacelerin.com)

Celerin's 3D tapestries almost always elicit a closer look — she manipulates her medium, yarn, in such a fascinating way that you can't help but be curious about how she does it. Her intricate, beautifully textured nature scenes are a medley of techniques including crochet, weaving, needle felting, and embroidery. She might use as many as 50 different yarns to create a seemingly simple blue sky, and the scenes often incorporate found objects like stones, twigs, feathers, and everyday items.

"They are primarily reused and recycled materials, but it goes beyond that. Many of the materials that I incorporate into the piece have a history or story of their own," she says. Celerin has cut a miniature pair of pants from an old pair of her son's jeans; created the inside of a tree trunk with a piece of her father-in-law's old army blanket; and yanked the wires from spiral notebooks and wrapped them with threads to replicate tree branches.



## MICHAL ANN CARLEY

*metal fabricator and glass-jewelry maker*

[lunasongdesign.com](http://lunasongdesign.com)

Carley works in two entirely different mediums and scales — shaping metal into sculptures and glass into small beads for jewelry — and yet they're more connected than one would think. Nature is the common thread for Carley. Colors, motifs, and forms in her surroundings drive her creative output. Take, for example, her abstract sculpture of a sandhill crane she saw perform a mournful dance after losing its partner. Or, her necklace that captures the dusty rose hues of coneflowers that have begun to turn.

Both metal and glass are transformative, she says, a fact that echoes her own story as an artist. Carley worked for many years as a painter and art professor. After recovering from an illness that forced her to learn to walk all over again, she felt compelled to do something much more physical. At her Luna Song Design studio, Carley fires up her forge, heating metal until it is red hot and workable, then hammers it into shape.

"You see the marks, the traces of all that heat, in the work," Carley says. "There's no illusion. It's all there."



## MARY HAMBLY

*paper artist*

[maryhamblyart.blogspot.com](http://maryhamblyart.blogspot.com)

Glancing at Hambly's quilts, you might assume they're made of cloth. But Hambly takes the traditional craft of quilting and gives it a contemporary twist by using Japanese paper that has been screen-printed by hand, often with nature-inspired patterns.

Her process is much like traditional quilting — she even uses a sewing machine, a portable Singer. Straight, perfect stitches are a hallmark of her work, which is not an easy feat. Paper is much less forgiving than cloth, and a misplaced stitch is irreparable.

"The stitching is like a meditative process because it has to be exactly right," says Hambly, who earned her master of fine arts at Indiana University.

Hambly encourages people to observe her work in two ways: from far away, to take in her original patterns and the piece as a whole, and then up close to see the stitches, patterns, and textures. "I think the paper quilts are so satisfying to me because I enjoy the amount of detail that is involved," she says.