

Dave Collins and Aaron Albertson

Nightlife in the Twin Cities

Music and entertainment

The Twin Cities nightlife scene is a great mix of all things that make a city's night life, well..., great. It is a combination of the famous and the unknown hidden treasure, the upscale proper alongside the dirty and grungy, and old standards mixing with new trends. It is easy to find live music any night of the week as well as many quiet places to relax by yourself or with friends.

There are many places to choose from in every neighborhood of the Twin Cities for an evening out. Downtown Minneapolis has a thriving nightlife with bars, restaurants, theaters, and concert venues all within walking distance of each other. Near the Minneapolis campus of the University of Minnesota is the Dinkytown neighborhood. Besides having a multitude of college student bars, you can also find a number of places for good live music, progressive theater, and lots of restaurants. There are also many small neighborhood treasures that are easy to get to by either bus or light rail.

The list below is a collection of my favorites. It is meant to represent the diversity of evening entertainment that can be found here. There are many more terrific places that are not mentioned here; and if you find that none below suits your interests, you may want to take a look at a local free newspaper, *City Pages*, that covers local events.

Downtown

First Avenue—The showpiece of Minneapolis nightlife is First Avenue, the club made famous by the movie *Purple Rain*. This club, once a bus depot, has been putting great musicians on its stage for more than

30 years. Live music by both local bands and nationally known artists can be heard here pretty much every night. Latin dance competitions are held every Thursday evening. After 10 p.m. on weekend nights, First Avenue becomes one of the most popular dance clubs in the Twin Cities. In the past year, Minneapolis Mayor R. T. Rybak has done two stage dives at First Avenue at two different shows.

7th Street Entry—A small club attached to First Avenue, 7th Street Entry has a more intimate setting than First Avenue and is a great place to see local bands.

Nye's Polonaise Room—A Polish American restaurant serving giant portions, Nye's also features a piano bar seven nights of the week and a polka band on weekend nights.

Brit's Pub—This English-themed bar has pub food, great beer, and an off-the-street patio featuring lawn bowling.

City Billiards Bar and Cafe—This pool hall with full-size billiards tables has a full bar and food menu.

Dakota Jazz Club & Restaurant—The Dakota features a creative menu serving American fare with performances by top-notch jazz artists every night.

Gay '90s—There are so many rooms in this giant dance club, I often get lost. Downstairs there is a bar room with a large seating area. There is also another room with

Dave Collins is public services team leader and associate director, e-mail: collins@macalester.edu, and Aaron Albertson is library specialist, e-mail albertson@macalester.edu, at Macalester College in St. Paul, Minnesota.

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almost no lighting that livens up around 11 p.m. with dancing. Upstairs there is a karaoke lounge, a room with a stage, a small room with a pool table, and another dance floor. Weekend nights feature drag queen performances.

Dinkytown

400 Bar—This is a Twin Cities standard known for having quality acts of local and national fame.

Triple Rock Social Club—The Triple Rock is a small bar with a patio and performances by some of the best local bands. It also has one of the best selections of punk ever found in a jukebox.

Cedar Cultural Center—The Cedar Cultural Center might be the Twin Cities venue with the widest diversity of music performed. Musicians range from throat singers to bluegrass to Irish folk. Virtually any type of music can be heard here.

Uptown

Uptown Bar and

Cafe—In the Uptown neighborhood, a few miles southwest of downtown, is the Uptown Bar. Following dinner at one of Uptown's many restaurants with a stroll around nearby Lake Calhoun, you can pay a visit to the Uptown Bar and catch some live rock music for a cheap cover charge. If you order a screwdriver or a Bloody Mary on most nights of the week, they will give you a commemorative pint glass.

Dulono's—Loved for its lack of trendiness and found in the trendiest neighborhood in Minneapolis, Dulono's is open until 3 a.m. with live bluegrass every Friday and Saturday night. Go with friends, order a pizza and a pitcher, sit back, and enjoy.

CC Club—The CC Club always brings in a young and exciting crowd. This bar is the

former hangout for the band The Replacements and has one of the best jukeboxes in the city.

Famous Dave's BBQ—This national chain started in Minneapolis. Come hear music performed by some of the best blues artists while stuffing yourself with BBQ.

Bar Abilene—Uptown scenesters appreciate this upscale restaurant and bar serving Western cuisine that their Web site identifies as "cowboy fusion." They also make 25 different kinds of margaritas.

Bryant-Lake Bowl—This restaurant, bar, bowling alley, and theater rolled into one is always fun.

Loring Park Neighborhood

Cafe and Bar Lurcat—Enjoy a full view of Loring Park from anywhere in the bar. The Lurcat is comfortable and has really nice decor.

19 Bar—This small, neighborhood, gay-friendly bar near Loring Park features darts and pool.

South Minneapolis

Matt's Bar—A neighborhood bar that claims to be the originator of the Juicy Lucy, a hamburger with hot melted cheese inside. The Juicy Lucy is so dangerous they are legally required to warn you about burning yourself before serving it.

Chatterbox Pub—The Chatterbox brings in the young crowd. It is a great place to go to with friends. Perhaps its best feature is the Atari with lots of old games to choose from—be nostalgic and play to your heart's content.

St. Paul

Turf Club—The most well-known rock club in Saint Paul is the Turf Club. Every time I go there I hear a great band with creative flair perform a long set. The music stage is on the main floor, and in the basement is a clown-themed lounge with books for browsing and buying, a small bar, and intimate seating. *~*



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