



FEATURED STORY

48 Hours In Berkley & Clawson

BY: MELINDA CLYNES, 1/19/2009



Compact and unpretentious are the sweet little 'burbs of Clawson and Berkley. But inside their comparable city limits are plenty of things to do and see, practice and polish, eat and drink.

Like bread and butter or shoes and socks, Berkley and Clawson team up well for a 48-hour frolic, so button up your parka, pull on your galoshes and head on out for a gallivanting weekend in these mellow Oakland County cities.



Friday Afternoon/Eve: Armoires, Bub's Daddy and Beer

For an eclectic afternoon of shopping in Clawson, start at [Leon & Lulu](#), where the smell of brewing coffee or fresh-baked treats and a blast of wild colors and shapes will inspire you to spend. Located in the old Ambassador Roller Rink, Leon and Lulu is a monolith of a store packed with furniture, home

décor and other eccentricities. From red, green and purple monster-shaped throw pillows (actually, they're branded as Uglydolls); to oodles of cool vases, lamps and candles; to amazing area rugs, this store will have your right brain jumping.

To satiate the kid in you, the next two stops are imperative: [Warp 9 Comics & Collectibles](#) for new and vintage comics and toys and comic-related memorabilia and [Doc Sweet's Candy Store](#) for a mango jelly beans, candy cigarettes, or a three-pound sucker.

You'll be able to buy Beemans Gum here in May, but in the mean time, how 'bout a pack of Teaberry? For the ex-gal or guy that dumps you on Christmas Eve, why not pick up some candied scorpions or chocolate-covered bugs to send their way on Valentine's Day?

Next, skip over to Berkley and grab a martini at [Amici's](#) smoke-free Living Room Lounge, where you can choose from more than 50 specialty martinis. If the munchies grab you, nosh on one of Amici's well-known gourmet pizzas, as you take in the warm, modern vibe, surrounded by locally created art that changes monthly.



If beer is your preference, make a stop – or spend the rest of the evening – at the [Berkley Front](#), which gallantly combines a dive bar atmosphere with a grandiose selection of good beer, most of which are craft brews and imports. At this smoky, storefront bar, you'll find neighborhood locals brushing elbows with beer aficionados sampling favorites from the 40 plus tap beers. From notable English ales to Bell's finest concoctions, you'll be hard pressed to choose. Upstairs is the rock-n-roll extension of the Berkley Front; the best acts are the swinging rockabilly shows, which always draw a dapper crowd.

Saturday Morning: Savasana and Stiches



For an experience that's part detox, but mostly nourishment of the soul, start your morning at the beautiful, blissful [House of Yoga](#) in downtown Berkley. Here, you'll set your psyche in a peaceful place before charging through the day's activities. The studio has an open, welcoming reception area, and the practice space is large and tranquil, with Sanskrit writing along the wall. Classes typically combine chanting, set to a hand-pumped harmonium; meditation; a gentle, but challenging practice; followed by more music, chanting and rest. House of Yoga owners and teachers exude a generous spirit, welcoming of yogis of all levels. Hatha and Ashtanga classes are offered on Saturday mornings.

To continue on the path toward enlightenment, join beginning knitters at ["...have you any wool?"](#) to exercise your creativity and patience. Four-week knitting classes begin monthly (Jan. 10), so join this lively mix of new knitters, from young to old, in the center of this lovely, cheery shop. If you dub yourself craft-inept, give it a go anyway; remember, knitting is the new Pilates, just like brown is the new black.

Saturday Afternoon: Michigan Rolls

Lunch at [Noble Fish](#) in Clawson, which is, hands-down, the best and maybe the only, backroom sushi bar in this quadrant of Oakland County. Sushi here is rolled diminutively, so you can sample extensively without becoming stuffed. Noble Fish's tuna-based "Michigan Rolls" (go figure) are always tasty, even for the most trepid sushi consumer. The market in front of the sushi bar is chocked full of Japanese imports like cookies, candy and salty snacks and has fresh sushi and fish to go.

Adequately loaded with omega-3s, turn your attention to supporting the independent merchants of downtown Berkley.

Check out the [Doll Hospital & Toy Soldier Shop](#) for cool, high-quality toys for the under 14 set. The folks here are friendly and know their merchandise; don't hesitate asking for help, especially if you're kid-less and simply don't know how to navigate through the pint-size jumble.



[Time Travelers Comics and Cards](#) is a fantastic hodgepodge of comics; comic, TV show and movie figurines and action figures; trading cards; and

assorted other stuff that you simply don't need but must have. It's a mixture of new and used, and if you don't see what you want, ask. The guys who work here are sometimes a bit gruff, but you never know what they'll dig up from the backroom. (Warning: both of these shops are difficult to exit, especially if you have kiddos in tow.)

Saturday Night: More Brews and a Little Fox Trot

Without a doubt, Saturday night's focus should return to beer: in particular, the handcrafted microbrews at Clawson's [Black Lotus Brewing Company](#). While this hulking corner bar at 14 Mile and Main St. is clearly the hippest hangout in town, it's also a place to imbibe in damn good beer. (Editorial disclaimer: no insult to Renshaw Bar & Grill, which earns its place in the "beloved, although dank and drabby, bar" category.)



At Black Lotus, six standard craft brews, including the chocolate-y Black Bottom Oatmeal Stout and the spunky Detroit Hip Hops Ale, are always on tap along with seasonal specialties. On tap this winter is the Honey Hemp and Oats brew made with Michigan honey, flaked oats and organic toasted hemp seeds – jimminy! Proceed with caution while sampling the winter solstice, Belgian-style strong ale aptly titled The GIFT. Do not take the word "strong" lightly. Black Lotus serves up an assortment of bar food, from nachos and salads to sandwiches and burgers, with ample vegetarian selections on the menu. Live entertainment varies, so check the website, but [Liz Larin](#) is scheduled on mid-month Saturday nights (Jan 17, Feb 21) with her folksy, R&B-sy repertoire.

For a late-night cocktail, a surreal, retro feel, and dancing among the blue hairs, check out the [Clawson Steak House](#), a 50-year-old Clawson mainstay. The Mark James Band plays crowd favorites every weekend, giving you a chance to

sport your toupee, tease your hair, and practice your west coast swing or Grosse Pointe shuffle on the ample dance floor until 1:00 a.m.

Sunday Morning: Omelets and Hotcakes

Greet the morning at [Berkley's Bistro & Café](#), a nondescript little Coolidge Hwy. jewel that serves up a tasty, albeit pricey, breakfast that will knock your slippers off. Egg combos are offered as scrambles, frittatas or omelets to suit your fancy. Try one of the fresh blends with mushroom, gouda and scallions or Kalamata olives, spinach and

artichokes. The coffee is so-so, but amen to the grits and biscuits.

Stuffed to the gills as you drive out of the city limits on Sunday afternoon, or into your driveway as the case may be, be sure to toot your horn or tip your hat to the two little towns of Clawson and Berkley that have left you feeling satiated in both body and spirit.

Melinda Clynes is a metro-Detroit-based freelancer and a regular contributor to [metromode](#) and [Model D](#). Her last article was [48 Hours In Rochester](#).

Photos:

Noble Fish

Leon and Lulu

Amici's

House of yoga

Doll Hospital and Toy Soldier Shop

Black Lotus Brewing Co.

**All photographs by Metro Detroit photographer [Marvin Shaouni](#)
*Marvin is the Managing Photographer for [Metromode](#) & [Model D](#).***