



BY RENU SAGGAR

Birmingham is one of America's most walkable towns.

It's better in Birmingham

Shop, dine and relax in this leafy suburb

Nestled amid some of Michigan's most affluent suburbs, Birmingham's pedestrian-friendly streets are filled with upscale shopping, dining, culture and a lively nightlife. Located along Woodward Avenue, about halfway between Detroit and Pontiac, this attractive town was voted one of the nation's Top 20 Most Walkable Communities.

Downtown Birmingham is one of the Midwest's premiere shopping districts with nearly 300 retailers. Visitors will find an incredible array of clothing and gift stores, salons, spas, antique shops, and art galleries and a centrally located park in the city center. Visitors can spend a summer evening browsing the galleries, taking in a concert in the park, attending one of the many festivals, or take a Sunday morning stroll at the Farmers Market. A wooded trail system, urban bike paths and the Rouge River all wind their way through the heart of the city.

The *Townsend Hotel* is a gem of European elegance, tucked away amidst the pleasing parks, and sophisticated designer shops. A haven for the most discerning travelers, its splendid combination of amenities, and quiet location mingles traditional elegance with genuine hospitality.

The *Townsend's Rugby Grille* features a warm and comfortable world-class dining experience. Intimate tables set amidst fresh-cut flowers, cozy fireplace, rich cherry wood walls, and culinary magic all make for a remarkable dining experience. Rugby Grille offers a sumptuous menu of innovative American-Continental cuisine, accompanied by a world class selection of wines and spirits. The Rugby Grille has been recognized with many

culinary awards including, "One of the Top Ten Best Restaurants in the United States," by Zagat's Restaurant Guide.

The *Detroit Zoo* is located about 2 miles (3.2 km) north of the Detroit city limits at the intersection of Woodward Avenue, and 10 Mile Road, in Royal Oak. Exhibits include *The Arctic Ring of Life*, the world's largest polar bear habitat and the *Asian Forest*, home to red pandas and Amur tigers. The *Penguinarium* is a favorite stop for visitors. In the Australian Outback, guests can get face to face with red kangaroos and wallabies without any barriers.

Back again this summer is the *Dinosauria* exhibit through September 5, featuring more than 30 life-like animatronic dinosaurs that roar, snarl and move. Travel back in time as you explore a lush, three-acre DinoTrail life in the Mesozoic Era.

Kids will feel just like paleontologists as they learn to excavate a dino dig, site sift for fossils, examine dinosaur skulls, teeth and claws, and a walk through a simulated dinosaur rib cage.

The *Wild Adventure Ride*, located inside the Ford Education Center, is the country's first zoo-based virtual reality voyage. *Giraffe Encounter* brings guests to eye to eye with the zoo's tallest creatures on an elevated viewing platform overlooking the giraffe habitat.

Feeding opportunities are available depending of course on the giraffes' appetites, but the attraction is generally open from Tuesday through Sunday through the end of September.

Long time favorites include the *Tauber Family Railroad*, a wonderful miniature railroad that has carried half a million riders a year since 1931.



The Arctic Ring of Life exhibit includes a walk through bear and seal tunnel.