

# DINING OUT

The distance between the Crystal Coast and Germany is several thousand miles. During the periods of heavy immigration to the United States, especially in the 19th and early 20th centuries, many Germans bridged the distance, settling in both urban and rural parts of our country.

They brought with them much that is now

well assimilated into the American fabric, from classical music, to technical and agricultural expertise to certain food and drink. Perhaps most famous in this last category are German wursts and beers.

In Germany, especially in Bavaria, the biergarten (an indoor and outdoor establishment) is a center of social life. There, patrons enjoy casual food and drink (that is, good beer) in an atmosphere of "*Gemütlichkeit*"—an atmosphere that is cozy, informal and friendly. Once in this country, German immigrants set about to recreate this *Gemütlichkeit* by replicating the biergartens of the old country as "beer gardens" in their new homeland. They became especially popular places in American cities with large German and German-American populations during the early 20th century. Today observers of the American social scene report that biergartens are enjoying a resurgence in popularity.

One such biergarten has appeared during the past year in Atlantic Beach. Called the Idle Hour Biergarten, it offers patrons liquid and solid refreshment that is reminiscent of its earlier counterparts, in both indoor and outdoor settings. In fact, the owners proudly proclaim that at the Idle Hour, "We're social"—a place characterized by *Gemütlichkeit*.

Of course, for centuries "social" has involved interesting liquids, especially beer. The Idle Hour Biergarten offers a very wide choice of European, notably Germanic, and domestic, including North Carolina, beers. Several are available on tap. There are German ale, bock, dunkel and pilsner brews, as well as several North Carolina craft beers—all on tap. They can be consumed from the simple glass or the classic stein. Readily available, too, are bottled brews—ales, dunkels, lagers, pilsners, porters and stouts—from both domestic and foreign breweries. Appealing to broader contemporary tastes, also available is a nice variety of wines, particularly white wines, imported from Austria, France and Germany.

With the beer or wine, patrons may enjoy a selection of small plates, sausages and large plates that vary seasonally and that pair well with the drinks. Though not all have German roots, the small plates are often interesting options. Among them are a lump crab and sweet corn spread (including Gruyere cheese, cream cheese, and spring onions); meatloaf and bratwurst sliders on pretzel rolls; fried cheese curds and fried pickles; and a special Bavarian pretzel. The small plates are priced between \$5.50 and \$12.50.

Sausage sandwiches, whether centered traditionally on bratwurst, cheddarwurst, hot sage sausage or an all-beef frankfurter, are accompanied variously by house-made kraut, onions, pickles, cheese, mayonnaise, mustard and cured tomato and cucumber relish. These sandwiches cost \$8.50.

The large plates at the Idle Hour Biergarten offer several interesting choices. Cheese lovers, for example, might select the Bavarian grilled cheese sandwich, which melts together Gruyere, Havarti and Muenster cheeses on sourdough bread. Seafood fanciers might choose among the grain mustard crab cake sandwich, the lobster salad sandwich and the yellowfin tuna salad melt. Meat lovers might consider either the house signature burger (composed of ground beef and ground veal) or the schnitzel sandwich (made with pan-fried North Carolina pork loin). The large plates are served with one side dish, a choice among crispy onion strings, house-cut fries, German potato salad, Carolina coleslaw or cucumber and cured tomato salad. These plates are priced between \$8.50 and \$14.

The Idle Hour Biergarten is located on the Atlantic Beach Circle at 121 Atlantic Boulevard. It serves patrons, beginning at noon, from Wednesday through Monday. The phone number is 773-0008, and the web address is [idlehourbiergarten.com](http://idlehourbiergarten.com).

## Carteret County Annual HAZARDOUS MATERIALS COLLECTION DAY



September 19, 2015  
8 a.m.-1 p.m.

at the

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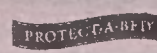
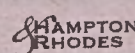
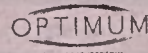
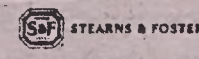
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