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FARMERS MARKET GIFT GUIDE

IT'S *LIT*

Three of Wilmington's Coziest Corners

BY FANNY SLATER | PHOTOS BY DOUG YOUNG

The Gazebo Bar at Dram Yard / ARRIVE Wilmington

Smoke on the Water

Flytrap Brewing

Photos by Doug Young

The allure of a twilight excursion to outdoor seating at one of Wilmington's many bars and restaurants is relatable. It doesn't have to stop in the winter. The fire pits at the following three venues invite folks to stay and spark an atmosphere that ignites the Port City's social scene.

The Gazebo Bar at Dram Yard / ARRIVE Wilmington

(910) 782-2404 | dramyard.com/gazebo-bar

If you're looking for a brick courtyard edged with palm trees and live fires with a choice of three fire pits and two fireplaces, find them at the boutique ARRIVE Hotel's Gazebo Bar at Dock and South 2nd streets. I recommend the fried beets with whipped goat cheese or the sesame-perfumed Japanese fried chicken sandwich. Cocktails include the Half-Penny Buck made with bourbon, fresh ginger and a tropical twist of pineapple and lime. Bocce and croquet are on hand. As are $10 tiki drinks Tuesdays and Thursdays from 3–10 p.m.

Smoke on the Water

(910) 833-5069 | smokeonthewaternc.com

Many visit Smoke on the Water for its barbecue, backyard patio and west-facing boardwalk, where you can watch the sunset in the late evening wearing short sleeves during the long days of summer. Once the season changes, watch the early evening sunset in a sweater while sitting around a large fire pit fueled by wood. For a snack, I recommend the hickory-smoked trout-jalapeño dip dotted with sharp shallots and fresh dill or chilled oysters with Bloody Mary granita.

Flytrap Brewing

(910) 769-2881 | flytrapbrewing.com

Located in the Brooklyn Arts District, Flytrap's courtyard, once a dusty gravel lot, is now a beer garden with twinkly lights, greenery, picnic tables and two fire pits that welcome your family, friends and four-legged companions. Owners Mike and Emily Barlas have given the neighborhood an inviting, community-driven space. The brewery specializes in American and Belgian ales but also serves kombucha, ciders and sustainably made natural wine. I strongly suggest trying anything with the word "saison" or "sour" in its name.