

CARMEL ARTS & D



Just outside Indianapolis, this town has become a cultural hub in its own right.

Designs ON Carmel



Carmel, Ind., has graduated from suburb to showplace in recent years, thanks in no small part to the emergence of its Arts & Design District. Packed with boutique shops, art galleries, cultural attractions and restaurants, this vibrant region has quickly become a premier central-Indiana destination.

In the Making

The district has been an evolving work-in-progress since the announcement of its development in 2003. The City of Carmel, along with local developers and private investors, contributed more than \$10 million for improvements such as strengthening infrastructure; constructing new shopping centers, offices and other buildings; and generally putting a fresh new face on the neighborhood.

“We realize the tremendous impact that the arts have on our community and invest in areas such as the Carmel

Arts & Design District to help attract economic development,” said Carmel Mayor Jim Brainard. “The arts are a valuable asset, attracting jobs and enhancing the quality of life in central Indiana. In addition, first-rate arts and culture are instrumental in helping to attract young, educated professionals who will bring their energy and talent to the area.”

Now, charming details such as brick sidewalks and distinctive street lighting lend the still relatively new neighborhood a historical look and feel. Public art offers additional visual interest, with life-size bronze sculptures from J. Seward Johnson Jr.’s Man on the Street series scattered throughout the district.

Trade Specialists

Carmel’s answer to Chicago’s Merchandise Mart, the \$20 million Indiana Design Center, anchors the district, offering one-stop shopping for all things home design



ART GALLERY WALK / HCCVB

CITY CENTER FOUNTAIN / HCCVB

PUBLIC ART / HCCVB

and decor. A partnership between the city and Pedcor Companies and the only facility of its kind within the state of Indiana, the design center hosts a wide-ranging community of industry professionals under one roof.

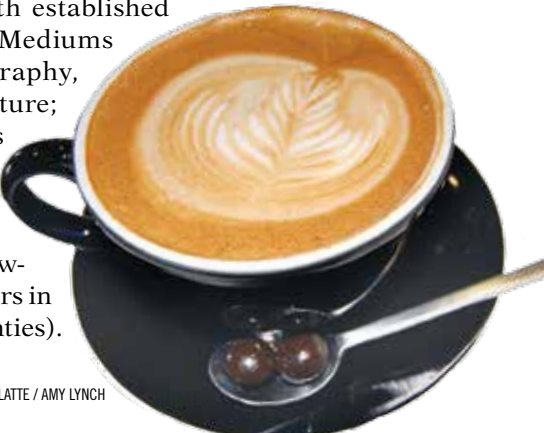
“The Indiana Design Center includes more than 30 businesses and is a statewide resource; more than 20 of the businesses in the center moved to Carmel to be part of it,” said Andrea Kleymeyer, the design center’s marketing director. “The design center has brought new business to the district and is also a top destination for trade professionals and consumers.”

On the first floor, customers can browse the showrooms of Walter Knabe Studios, Santarossa Mosaic and Tile, Conceptual Kitchens, Holder Mattress and other highly regarded Indiana companies. Furnished with private offices and a resource library, the expansive second floor is devoted mainly to trade professionals and their clients.

“Many of the retail showrooms also offer in-house

design services for the public,” Kleymeyer said. “The public may shop the second floor trade showrooms with their own designer or utilize the IDC’s Designer On Call program, which connects consumers with professionals.”

Rounding out the arts portion of the Arts & Design District, Evan Lurie Fine Art Gallery, ArtSplash Gallery and nearly a dozen other galleries highlight works from artists both established and emerging. Mediums include photography, paint and sculpture; several shops promote participants in the Indiana Glass Trail (which showcases glassworkers in 14 Indiana counties).



EGGSHELL BISTRO LATTE / AMY LYNCH

Joggers, walkers, bikers and skaters get in a workout on the Monon Trail—which also offers easy (and green) access to area restaurants and shops.



HAMILTON COUNTY CONVENTION AND VISITORS BUREAU

Open-house gallery walks held on the second Saturday of each month give visitors a chance to pop in and out of galleries and enjoy live entertainment and refreshments along the way.

Eats and Theater Seats

To fuel up, the district holds an array of eateries from classy to casual. Bub's Burgers and Ice Cream, Detour American Grille, and Muldoon's attract loyal followings of hungry regulars, and retro treats from the charming Simply Sweet Shoppe make a perfect finale to any meal.

Just down Rangeline Road, the Carmel City Center is an attraction on its own merits, populated with a diverse slate of local restaurants and retailers. Uber Boutique; Rain Salon and Spa; Eye Candy Boutique; Holy Cow, Cupcakes!; Divvy; and Eggshell Bistro are just a few of the notable businesses that call this \$300 million mixed-use facility home. The site also hosts a popular seasonal farmers' market.



HAMILTON COUNTY CONVENTION AND VISITORS BUREAU

The Palladium concert hall at the Center for the Performing Arts showcases a variety of musical performances.

Behind the City Center, the Center for the Performing Arts lures culture-minded patrons with a year-round calendar of events. The acoustically ideal 1,600-seat Palladium concert hall is where big-name performers such as Michael McDonald, Sheryl Crow and Kenny Loggins stop; the center's smaller theater, the Tarkington, hosts drama, music, dance and lectures.

Linking Indianapolis and Carmel through a well-traveled greenway, the Monon Trail offers easy access to the City Center and the Arts & Design District via foot or bike.

"The Arts & Design District, with its unique galleries and events, is a

definite draw, and the fact that it is in close proximity to the Palladium and Carmel City Center makes it possible for people to enjoy a full range of dining, shopping and entertainment options all within walking distance," said Michelle Krcmery, the City Center's marketing director.

Planning Your Trip

For more information about Carmel's Arts & Design District, call (317) 571-2787 or visit www.carmelartsanddesign.com. For trip-planning assistance, contact a local AAA agent or visit AAA.com/travel.

H&A

■ Amy Lynch is a writer from Indianapolis.