

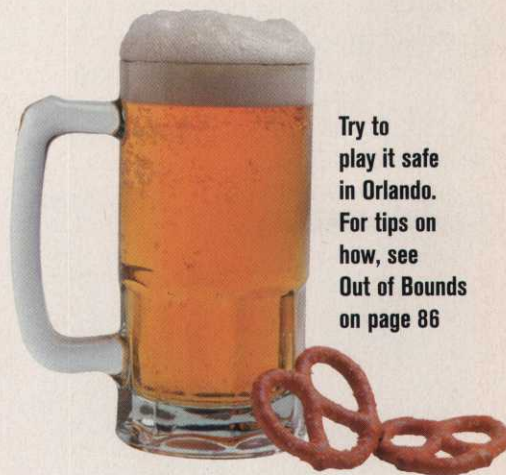
No Offense, Mickey

Here's how to get off Orlando's beaten path for a little R&R during the greatest show on Earth . . . err . . . turf

BY JOEL D. JACKSON

after all-day seminars and trekking the GCSAA trade-show floor at Orlando's Orange County Convention Center, it's a good bet you'll be ready for a break. While there are plenty of hotels and restaurants on popular International Drive, there are just as many nearby local hangouts if you want to get away from the crowd, have a cool brew and get some reasonably priced food.

Those seeking the sports bar/grill experience won't be disappointed. Venues include two Orlando Ale Houses, one on Kirkman Road (just



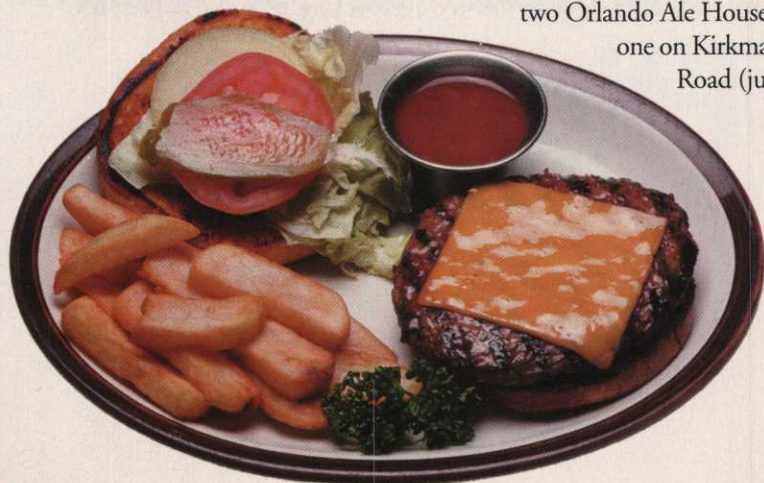
Try to play it safe in Orlando. For tips on how, see *Out of Bounds* on page 86

north of the International Drive area) and one in Lake Buena Vista (on State Route 535, about 10 minutes west on Interstate 4). Each Ale House has a gazillion TVs covering sports 24/7, dollar beers and good food. J.B.'s Sports Bar (also on Kirkman Road) is another good bet.

Take Kirkman a little farther north, and you'll find Sam Snead's Tavern. Sam's golf memorabilia is on display, with good food to boot. Another recently remodeled golf bar is the Fairways Lounge at the Grand Cypress Club in the Lake Buena Vista area. If you must do Disney, there's the ESPN Club at the Boardwalk/Epcot complex. It's easy to get to from the convention center and is about a 15-minute ride.

Other local favorites include J.T.'s restaurant and bar. Hooters features three outlets near the

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GCSAA Preview

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convention center. The outlet at Pointe Orlando on International Drive will probably be mobbed, so you might want to hit the one on Kirkman Road for more elbow room (notice how Kirkman Road keeps coming up?), located just past Universal Studios. There's also a Hooters in Lake Buena Vista.

Pointe Orlando also sports The Players Club and Dan Marino's Tavern, but they're a little pricier than the others.

If you want to go primitive and visit a dive that has survived all the Disney-related flash and dash, don't miss The Big Bamboo Bar off State Route 535 and U.S. 192 in Kissimmee, not far from the convention center. This plain, ramshackle concrete-block bar with dirt parking lot and a screen door for air conditioning is a real urban legend that doesn't make the guidebooks. The walls are adorned with business cards of practically everyone who has worked at Disney, along with cartoon

sketches by original Disney animators. The furnishings are early flea market — rear seats from Econoline vans are used for booth seats along with wooden-cable spools for tables. The atmosphere may be rustic, but the beer is cold.

The international brethren can get a little slice of home or a pint at the Cricketeer Arms Pub in the Mercado complex on International Drive. For those ale lovers wanting to shake the tourist traffic, there are Kitty O'Shea's at Lake Buena Vista and The Stagedoor English pub on West 192 past Disney (friendly folks, full bar and even karaoke).

If you do have champagne tastes, there's always the Wyndham Palace Hotel in Lake Buena Vista. It features free champagne at sunset in the piano lounge on the 27th floor while over-

looking Disney fireworks. There is excellent five-star dining at Arthur's 27 and the Outback (not the chain), where reservations are required to sample the kangaroo and ostrich.

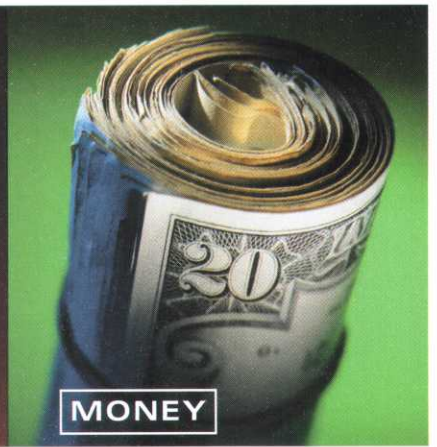
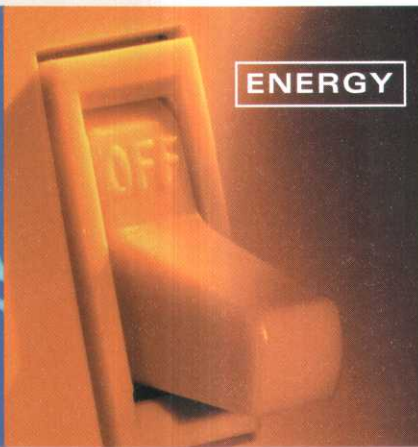
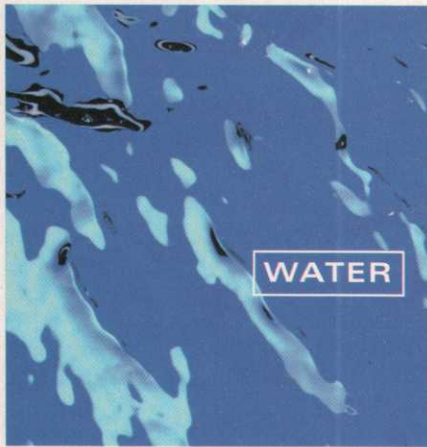
Less expensive but very popular are the two Bahamas Breeze restaurants, one on International Drive and the other on State Route 535 near Lake Buena Vista. They feature rum drinks, reggae music and Floribbean cuisine. I like the Jamaican Wings, which are huge.

If guys want to shop and do the Tim Allen grunt, there's the humongous Bass Pro Shops store on the International Drive north extension. Just take a right on International Drive, which is off — you guessed it — Kirkman Road. ■



Jackson, Golfdom's contributing editor and an Orlando resident, knows the city's scene better than the chamber of commerce.

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