

5 Most Rockin' Outdoor Music Venues

Whether you're a hiker, a camper or a (semiprofessional) picnicker, we've got the right amphitheater for you. Consider this your backstage pass to a groovy weekend, complete with exclusive readers-only hotel deals! BY RACHEL BERTSCHE

SUMMER-LOVE FESTS!

Country, jazz, gospel. Whatever your jam, there's a music festival for you.

APRIL
29-May 8: **New Orleans Jazz & Heritage Festival (aka Jazzfest)**

Welcome back: Jazzfest was on shaky ground in 2006, after Hurricane Katrina. But it survived, and that year's concert, with headliner Bruce Springsteen, was an emotional homecoming for many local performers.

MAY
21: **Pachanga Latino Music Festival at Fiesta Gardens in Austin, Texas**

27-30: **The Sasquatch! Music Festival in George, Washington**, puts an emphasis on indie bands, though you can catch alternative, hip-hop and comedy acts, too.

JUNE
4-5: **Chicago Gospel Music Festival**

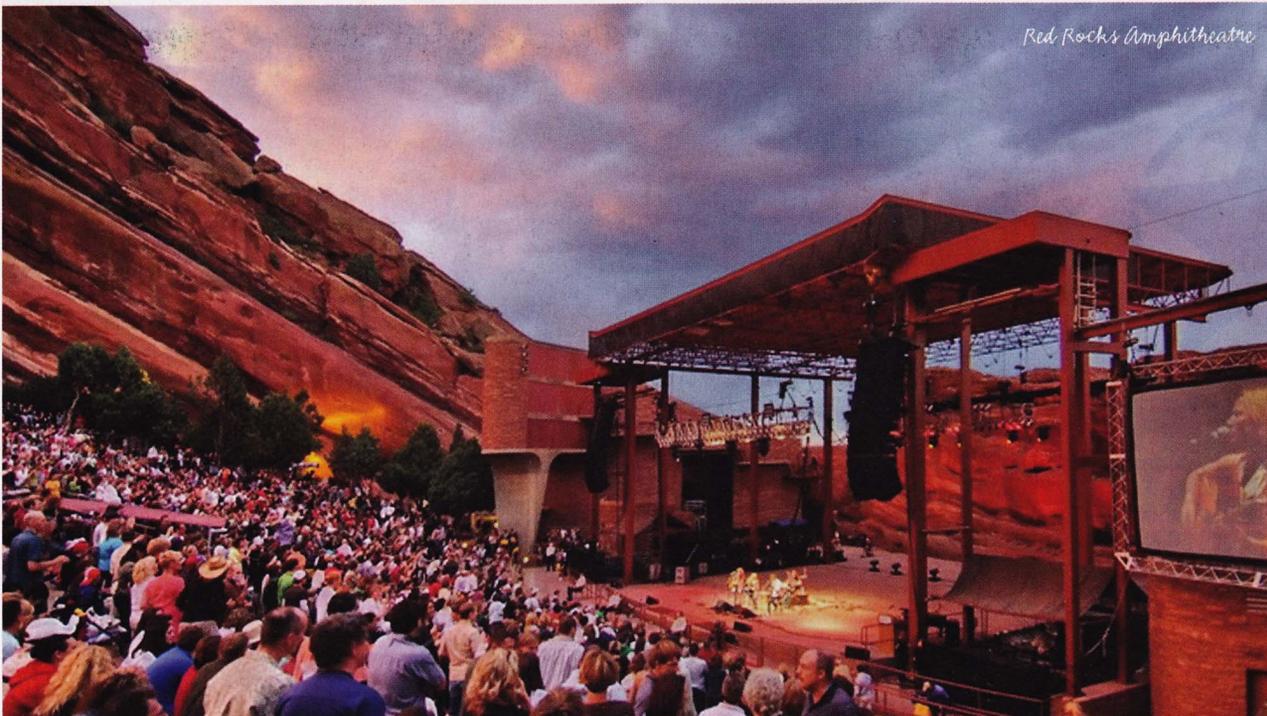
9-12: **Ojai Music Festival in Ojai, California**

Is this paradise? The grounds of the classical-music fest doubled as Shangri-La in the 1937 Frank Capra film *Lost Horizon*.

9-12: **The Bonnaroo Music & Art Festival in Manchester, Tennessee**, began with a focus on rock bands, but has expanded to include hip-hop, bluegrass and electronica.

Never a dull moment: In 2008, Kanye West's *Glow in the Dark* set started two hours late—at 4:30 a.m.! The crowd booed the rapper, pelting the stage with glow sticks.

Red Rocks Amphitheatre



1 For Hikers
Red Rocks Amphitheatre, Morrison, Colorado

Picture This: Two 300-foot sandstone towers bookend the stage to create a perfect acoustic experience, but you'll have to work for it. "There's a slippery uphill walk from the parking lot," one concertgoer says. But that's no trouble for a hiker like you (who can take on the world-renowned Red Rocks trail while in town). At the top, there's a fab view of the mountains, and the stage.

Rock On: The 2011 acts include Dispatch and Big Head Todd and the Monsters. (See redrocksonline.com for the full roster.)

Trivia! In 1971, a riot at a Jethro Tull concert caused a ban on rock acts for five years. Now, the British group is coming back on June 8 for the Aqualung 40th Anniversary Tour.

Spiritual Experience: Every year worshippers fill the house for the Easter Sunrise Service. Check out the April 24 service, available online for six weeks (netcastvideo.com/cc-easter).

READER DEAL: Arrowhead Manor is a comfy B&B with great views. Stay two nights and get the third free, or get up to 30 percent off regular room rates for a limited time when you mention EDWRR. (arrowheadmanor.com; doubles from \$129 before discount)

2 For Picnickers
Tanglewood, Lenox, Massachusetts

Picture This: Pick up gruyère from the beloved Great Barrington cheese shop Rubiner's (rubiners.com). Then set up your picnic on the massive emerald green lawn overlooking the Stockbridge Bowl and listen to the Boston Pops or pop music—the setting's so great that the music is a bonus. The next day, you can take that blanket to nearby Bash Bish Falls, or up the Appalachian Trail.

Rock On: The Earth, Wind & Fire 40th-anniversary tour lands here at the end of June; Tanglewood regular James Taylor plays over Independence Day weekend. (See bso.org for the full roster.)

Trivia! The name comes from Nathaniel Hawthorne's children's book *Tanglewood Tales*, which he wrote on the property.

The View from the Stage: "This is home base for me," James Taylor has said. "It's always had a connection—'Sweet Baby James,' 'Belfast to Boston.' It's this landscape that's inside my head."

READER DEAL: The Cornell in Lenox is made up of three Victorian houses at the base of a wooded nature preserve. Stay two nights for \$195 a night and get the third night for \$25. (cornellbb.com; doubles from \$150 before discount)

SUMMER-LOVE FESTS!
continued...

9-12: Country Music Association Music Festival in Nashville
Watch from your living room: ABC airs highlights from the festival in a two-hour special, CMA Music Festival: Country Music's Biggest Party.

11-18: Bill Monroe Memorial Bean Blossom Bluegrass Festival in Bean Blossom, Indiana
Be a part of history: The 45-year-old fest is the oldest continuously running bluegrass festival in the world. It's named for the father of bluegrass, Bill Monroe, who founded the celebration in a park he purchased in this small town.

30-July 3: Electric Forest Festival in Rothbury, Michigan

AUGUST

5-7: Satchmo SummerFest, celebrating Louis Armstrong, in New Orleans

5-7: Lollapalooza in Chicago features acts ranging from heavy metal to hip-hop to punk rock.

Don't drop the entertainment: Headliner Lady Gaga made a guest appearance during a Semi Precious Weapons performance in 2010, crowd-surfing while wearing nothing but fishnets (on bottom and top) and shorts.

BOOK NOW!

Austin's South By Southwest festival (sxsw.com) in March fills up fast. Start making plans for 2012, and be sure to hit up Rach's big party. **Feedback.**



The Gorge Amphitheatre



The Hollywood Bowl



Tanglewood



The Backyard

3 For Campers
The Gorge Amphitheatre, George, Washington

Picture This: Your tent is pitched on adjacent grounds, a five-minute walk to your seat. Once settled in, you'll take in sweeping views of the Columbia Gorge Canyon. The further back you are, the better your view, so there's not a bad seat in the house.

Rock On: The Sasquatch! Music Festival in May showcases indie bands, including Rach's fave, the Foo Fighters. (See livenation.com for the full roster.)

Vineyard Haven: Both sides of the Columbia River are home to microbreweries and wineries, including the beautiful Maryhill Winery (maryhillwinery.com), also a serious music venue in its own right; it hosted Jackson Browne and Natalie Merchant in 2010.

The View from the Stage: "This is heaven's amphitheater," Dave Matthews says on his CD/DVD *The Gorge*. "I feel like I'm making a racket in a place that should be quiet."

READER DEAL: If you're less of a camper and more of, say, a swimming-pool lover, try The Cave B Inn at Sagecliffe. Book an overnight stay for two for \$175, midweek (Sunday through Thursday) during May, June and October. (sagecliffe.com; doubles from \$250 before discount)

4 For the Whole Family
Hollywood Bowl, Los Angeles

Picture This: The largest natural outdoor amphitheater in the United States is set against the backdrop of the Hollywood Hills and the iconic Hollywood sign. "I prefer the cheap seats because you can dance with the other diehards," one Bowl regular says. That's also where your kids can make some noise. Sign them up for SummerSounds camp, where they'll take in a performance every morning. At night the family can congregate back at the Bowl for a Sound of Music sing-along or a production of *Hairspray*.

Rock On: The summer lineup includes Dolly Parton's debut and a Fourth of July celebration with Hall & Oates. (See hollywoodbowl.com for the full roster.)

Trivia! Here, the Fab Four recorded the cult album *The Beatles*

at the Hollywood Bowl. Download "Dizzy Miss Lizzy." **The View from the Stage:** "What an honor it is to stand on this stage," Carrie Underwood said during her 2010 show. "I have only seen it on TV and in movies, so excuse me if I get a little emotional tonight. The wall of people in front of me is just spectacular!"

READER DEAL: The one-bedroom suites at the Magic Castle Hotel are fully equipped with kitchens and living areas, and guests get access to the members-only Magic Castle club. Call and mention EDWRR to get a free upgrade to a one-bedroom suite (\$30 to \$40 value) and free picnic snacks; valid through July 1. (323-851-0800; doubles from \$164 before discount)

5 For Eco-Lovers
The Backyard at Bee Cave, Austin, Texas

Picture This: Rolling hills of blooming bluebonnets and ancient oak trees surround you. Even in the bathroom you're not far from nature: Look through the solar panels to see blue sky. Feast on the venue's world-class Texas barbecue, and after the show head to Congress Bridge, under which 1.5 million bats congregate: The sight attracts some 100,000 visitors each summer.

Rock On: Willie Nelson plays on April 30, the day he turns 78. (See thebackyard.net for the full roster.)

Trivia! Owner Tim O'Connor closed the first incarnation in 2008, after an outdoor mall was built on neighboring property. **More Where That Came From:** Austin's slogan is "The Live Music Capital of the World"; it has more music venues per capita than any other city in the U.S. We like the honky-tonk dance hall Broken Spoke (brokenspokeaustintx.com).

READER DEAL: At The Mountain Star Lodge, every room has a patio overlooking a nature preserve. Take 10 percent off rooms when you mention EDWRR. (mountainstarlodge.com; doubles from \$119 before discount)

DIAL UP THE DEALS!
Get these hotel deals sent to your phone! Download the free mobile app at gettag.mobi, and use it to snap this bar code.