

# Big block party

Art, food, music take to the streets for Jazzin' on Jefferson

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As outsiders who've driven Jefferson into downtown Detroit know, over the years the major thoroughfare has had stretches that more closely resembled a war zone than a bustling metropolis.

As Detroit continues its comeback, however, new businesses are cropping up along Jefferson and elsewhere. The second annual Jazzin' on Jefferson, on June 25, along Jefferson from Alter to Chalmers, is not only a celebration of art and music, but an invitation for outsiders to revisit an area they may have written off.

The legendary New Orleans-based Dirty Dozen Brass Band — who've performed on albums by the Black Crowes, David Bowie, Elvis Costello and Dr. John — are the headliners, but the free festival also features performances from many top local jazz and blues artists, including organist/vocalist Chris Goddard of the Brothers Groove, drummer R.J. Spangler, vocalist Olessa Harris, award-winning trumpeter Marcus Belgrave and the all-female jazz ensemble Straight Ahead.

In 2003, festival program director Chris Garland, of the Jefferson East Business Association, said they began researching

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Above: Thousands are expected to attend the second annual Jazzin' on Jefferson, on Detroit's east side.

Below: Dominic Pangborn, who designed the Jazzin' on Jefferson logo, sold festival merchandise last year.



## dining out

### Jefferson

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the area to come up with ways to promote it.

"What we found — some of which was not a big surprise — was that our neighborhood has been putting out great jazz and blues musicians [for years]," said Garland, a Harper Woods resident. The historic Jefferson-Chalmers business district is home to two of the city's last remaining Big Band-era ballrooms, the Monticello and the Vanity.

Harris, who played last year as well, said she's looking forward to her second Jazzin' on Jefferson. The veteran singer began performing at 14, was a featured singer with B.B. King and later worked with King's former drummer. After giving up music for several years, Belgrave urged her to return to the stage, and he then introduced her to Spangler.

"I like to perform where everybody gets something out of it," Harris said. "With each thing I do, I give it my best ... I'm just somebody that sings from the soul with every tune."

Last year, organizers drew 8,000-10,000 visitors, many from within walking distance, Garland said. The festival, located on the Grosse Pointe Park border, attracted city dwellers and suburbanites alike, with food, art, music and shopping provided by local vendors. Well-



known artist Dominic Pangborn again designed the festival poster. Garland said the Pure Detroit Design Lab, which offers pieces by local designers, will set up shop at the festival for the day. There will be arts and crafts projects for kids, and artisans will demonstrate their methods and wares.

Although still in its infancy, Garland said Jazzin' is bigger this year, adding a stage (for a total of three), an hour and a city block.

"There's a lot of new activity — more reasons for people to attend and stick around once they get here," Garland said.

Jazzin' on Jefferson runs from 11 a.m. to 9 p.m. Saturday, June 25. Jefferson will be closed from Chalmers to Alter starting at 6 p.m. Friday, June 24 through the festival itself on Saturday. Admission is free, and street parking is available. For more information, call JEBAA at (313) 331-7939 or visit [www.jeffersoneast.org](http://www.jeffersoneast.org).

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