

If you're looking for a saloon, dance hall and juke joint feel, there's none better than the **Grizzly Rose** www.grizzlyrose.com 5450 North Valley Highway which features live country music six days a week, dancing lessons, a mechanical bull and boot scooting babes as well as octogenarian two step pros.

For jazz aficionados, **Dazzle Jazz** dazzlejazz.com 930 Lincoln St. is the local hang within a town devoid of alternatives. Plush and purple due to the neon lighting, it's a relaxing venue for all styles of jazz.

The premier festival is a summer-long series of concerts with major acts held in the lush **Botanic Gardens** concerts.botanicgardens.org in a breathtaking setting. Starting in mid-June through early September, in 2014 it features Natalie Cole, BB King, Joan Baez, Jimmy Cliff, Gipsy Kings and John Hiatt with Taj Mahal among others.

Swallow Hill also produces **Ukefest** swallowhillmusic.org/events-and-festivals/ukefest, a three-day event in early June celebrating all things ukulele. For the youth, hip hop and urban music crowd, **Westword Music Showcase** microapp.westword.com/musicshowcase/2014 takes place in late June with over 150 local artists and a few major acts appearing on 12 stages, all in one day.

One of the better festivals is the three-day **Rocky-Grass** www.bluegrass.com/rockygrass, for traditionalists, which has run for 42 years in the small mountain town of Lyons in late July. Only a year younger, over four days at the Summer Solstice weekend of June 19-22, is **Telluride Bluegrass** www.bluegrass.com/telluride with an equally stellar lineup as its sister fest. But it features more contemporary artists such as Elvis Costello, David Byrne and Lyle Lovett to mix it up a bit.

And at the top end, there are the corporate arenas and stadiums, but it's the stony majesty of **Red Rocks Park and Amphitheatre** redrocksonline.com 18300 W. Alameda Parkway, Morrison that epitomises the splendor of the city's music, as seen first in the U2 film shot there and many more concerts taped over the decades.

On a side note, 32 year promoter Barry Fey, who pioneered that venue as well as leading the style of early '70s modern concert tours in the US with The Who, The Rolling Stones and many more, was someone I was blessed to work with and his book on his time in the biz, published in 2011, is a classic. **Backstage Past** is a riveting read from a great spirit who sadly took his own life last year due to illness.

Being a historic cowtown, there are heritage hotels of spectacular architecture and homegrown grace, including the elegant **Brown Palace Hotel & Spa** www.brownpalace.com; the swish **Warwick Denver** www.warwickdenver.com; the old-timey yet modern **Magnolia** www.magnoliahotels.com/denver; and the opulent **Hotel Teatro** www.hotelteatro.com. But for my money, I opted for the **Sheraton Denver Downtown** www.sheratondenverdowntown.com which is smack in the city centre, right on a free city tramline in the heart of the 18th Street Pedestrian Mall and is the largest hotel in Colorado, meticulously run. It's one of the few times I'd recommend a corporate brand, but I loved it.

Denver is a long way from the Airport, well over a \$60 cab ride so if you're only in for a few days, I'd advise a rental car to get around the outskirts of this large flat city and perhaps into the nearby mountains. However, it can get icy. Five minutes after I left the airport there was a 105-car pileup just a mile behind me.

To navigate the city and its events, **Westword** www.westword.com is a leading street press publication with gig guides, restaurants and reviews, while **Colorado Music World** www.colomusicbuzz.com is the monthly magazine that features local talent over major acts.

The Denver Post www.denverpost.com is the city's prime newspaper with a music site called **Reverb** www.heyreverb.com that includes gig guide, reviews and news. The paper also covers issues in the new world of recreational marijuana in their **Cannabist** site www.thecannabist.co which has a guide to shops, products and other ephemera. Remember that consumption in public, venues or

bars is illegal.

All right, all right, all right - I know some of you will take advantage of the only city in the US where recreational marijuana use is currently permitted and you'd expect me to have tried a few places for you. With the name Tripp on my ID card, which usually resulted in laughter or bad puns, I did just that but remained sober for my first three days of touring the dispensaries, apothecaries, wellness centres, hanging out with ganjapreneurs and being serviced by cannabis concierges in the limo tours and budtenders surrounded by hundreds of types of herb and hash. I didn't inhale!

Then I broke down on the last evening and had an edible, rather than smoking, and can report that they, like all strains of pot, are tested and their strengths given along with their heritage or drug content. So here are my four recommendations. You must be 21 and have a passport, not an Australian drivers licence, and you're restricted to buying only seven grams, rather than the 28 that local citizens can.

The Green Solution tgscolorado.com 4400 Grape St. has over one hundred strains and is closest to the airport if you're doing a fly by. But do not attempt to carry any at the airport or onto a flight.

3D Cannabis Centre 3dmmc.com was one of the first medicinal vendors and their expanding recreational retail shop has growing rooms on display with lower windows for wheelchair access viewing.

Lodo Wellness Centre lodowellnesscenter.com 1617 Wazee St. is in the city centre and is both recreational and medical product, right on the tramline. Very classy and more like an apothecary.

The Health Centre thhealth.com 1736 Downing St. is in a discreet and old style house with an upmarket hippie vibe rather than the convenience store ambience of many recreational operations and is also a medical outlet.

Want to stay in a **Cannabis Condo** instead of a hotel with seven different strains in bottles, pipes and papers awaiting you as well as a stocked fridge? Take up the option with **High Country Cannabis Tours** highcountrycannabistours.com. **R**

THIS PAGE CLOCKWISE:
RED ROCKS
THE INFAMOUS PURPLE HAZE
GRIZZLY ROSE

OTHER PAGE CLOCKWISE FROM TOP:
DENVER BOTANIC GARDENS
THE PARAMOUNT THEATRE
SWALLOW HILL MUSIC - PATRICK
DETHLEFS ©DANIEL PAGE
DENVER UKEFEST © SCOTT
MCCORMICK

