When the weather is nice, there's nothing better than enjoying a great meal or a drink with friends outside. But while Morris and Essex counties offer plenty of great choices for outdoor dining, sometimes you want to avoid the sidewalk scene and find a nice patio, terrace or courtyard that is removed from the hustle and bustle. These four gems fill the bill.

Pazzo Pazzo
74 Speedwell Ave.
Morristown
973.898.6606
pazzopazzo.com

Located just off “the Morristown green,” this eatery serves up regional Italian cuisine and a chic, swanky vibe. The multitiered backyard patio made of exposed brick and cobblestone is brightened with gigantic urns that explode with flowers. Once you're seated, it's easy to pretend you're in Europe. If rubbing elbows with the restaurant's trendy clientele doesn't heat things up for you, space heaters will help banish any evening chill. The menu was created by Guiliano Hazan, author of The Pasta Cookbook and Every Night Italian, which explains why the pasta dishes like pappardelle Bolognese and penne with vodka sauce steal the show. All of the dishes are prepared with homemade pasta. The menu puts a fresh twist on traditional Italian offerings, from crispy three-cheese polenta to an almond-laced cannoli shell filled with white chocolate, mascarpone and chocolate chips. In between those courses, try the thin-crust brick-oven pizza or zuppa di pesce for a heartier appetite. The outdoor bar offers nearly 60 specialty drinks, an international wine list and a wide variety of malt Scotches, whiskeys, grappas and cognacs. A DJ plays above the bar, adding to the energy, but quieter spots can also be found within the cozy outdoor dining area.

Cloverleaf Tavern
395 Bloomfield Ave.
Caldwell
973.226.9812
cloverleaftavern.com

The outdoor eating area at Cloverleaf Tavern in Caldwell offers a retreat from busy Bloomfield Avenue out front. Although the patio is spacious, it has the cozy feel of a friend's backyard. Indeed, the restaurant, which has been in the Dorchak family since it opened in 1933, isn't just a family-run business—it's made to feel like a family's home, with flower boxes and umbrellas dotted among the tables outside. The walls in the
The pub and restaurant leading out to the patio are covered in family portraits and memorabilia from the establishment's rich history. It is, after all, the oldest business in town. A modern glass atrium connects the restaurant to the outdoor dining area and offers a covered, open-air dining alternative on a drizzly evening. The restaurant's American fare includes traditional pub favorites, such as potato skins, crab cakes and sliders. But it's the hot, bubbling crab dip, 24 oz. sirloin steak, beer-battered fish and chips and juicy burgers that Cloverleaf is best known for. Lighter fare includes mandarin chicken salad, soups and club sandwiches. The bar offers 24 beers on tap and more than 65 in bottles. Live entertainment such as balloon artists and face painters keeps the kids happy every Wednesday from 6 to 8 p.m.

Clover Leaf Tavern (left) and Pazzo Pazzo (right)

**Piccolo's**

174 Kinnelon Rd.
Kinnelon
973.492.2700
piccolonjrestaurant.com

If you're looking for a tranquil outdoor setting with a cozy neighborhood feel, head to Piccolo's in Kinnelon. The large patio overlooks a beautiful, well-manicured landscape and flowing fountain, and the hum of ceiling fans spinning overhead lulls guests into instant relaxation. Ninety percent of the outdoor dining area is covered, so there's no need to rush inside if there is a sudden sprinkle. Although it's upscale, Piccolo's has an informal atmosphere, making it special enough for celebratory occasions and equally appropriate for dinner with the kids. Restaurant-goers often run into people they know here, and it's not unusual for them to chat between tables. Owner Albert Piccolo gets in on the table talk too, often greeting guests by their first name. The Italian menu offers a good selection of soups, salads and pizzas for those interested in light or lunchtime options. Popular dinner staples include penne pomodoro and cavatelli with broccoli (all pastas come in full or half orders), chicken parmigiana, shrimp scampi and almond-crusted salmon. After a meal, sit and relax with a mug of cappuccino and listen to the crickets chirping over the water. Then just breathe it all in—the summer air and a relaxing dining experience.

DelMonico

505 Pompton Ave.
Cedar Grove
973.433.0333
delmonico.html

Another smart choice for peaceful outdoor dining is DelMonico in Cedar Grove. Its dining patio is located in back of the restaurant and is equipped with fire pits, so you can dine alfresco in comfort even on a chilly evening. Whether you're in the mood for steak or Asian food, you can find it here—the restaurant's tagline is “Steak & Beyond.” Co-owner Bobby Wong of The Village Restaurant Group included many dishes that are popular at his other restaurants, such as The Village Gourmet and Mignon Steakhouse in Rutherford, Tina Louise in Carlstadt and Tao's in East Rutherford. His co-owner at DelMonico is his friend James Gandolfini, the Sopranos star. Entrees include six steak cuts available in small or large portions, or an extra-large, 44-ounce size meant for two. Patrons are given a choice of nine preparations, including hot pepper, steak marsala, blackened Cajun, butter and garlic, and traditional char. The extensive menu also includes a raw bar, pasta entrees, fish dishes and Asian favorites like General Tso's chicken. Open just since last October, DelMonico is a welcome edition to the Cedar Grove restaurant scene, with reasonably priced food in a lively, stylish space.

Piccolo's (left) and DelMonico (right)
More alfresco options:

**MORRIS**

Café Metro
60 Diamond Spring Rd.
Denville
973.625.1055
thecafemetro.com

Il Michelangelo Ristorante
91 Elcock Ave.
Boonton Township
973.316.1111
ilmichelangelo.com

The Montville Inn
167 Route 202
Montville
973.541.1234
montvilleinn.com

**ESSEX**

Above
1 South Orange Ave.
South Orange
973.76.ABOVE
aboverestaurantbar.com

Basilico
324 Millburn Ave.
Millburn
973.379.7020
basilicomillburn.com

Cuban Pete's
428 Bloomfield Ave.
Montclair
973.746.1100
cubanpetesrestaurant.com

Highlawn Pavilion
Eagle Rock Reservation
West Orange
973.731.3463
highlawn.com

Mompou
77 Ferry St.
Newark
973.578.8114
mompoutapas.com

27 Mix
27 Halsey St.
Newark
973.648.0643
27mix.com