



COURTESY OF FITZGERALD'S NIGHTCLUB

John Langford and Sally Timms perform at FitzGerald's December Country Calendar Show. The concert is just one great example of the diverse music offered at the club.

## FitzGerald's offers great music in a classic roadhouse atmosphere

Legendary Berwyn nightclub withstands the test of time by booking contemporary acts and an eclectic mix of blues, jazz, folk, country and rock artists

By **Elizabeth Macik**  
Contributing writer

When it comes to suburban music venues, FitzGerald's is truly the granddaddy of them all. A favorite destination for musicians and music lovers alike for more than a quarter of a century, the club has earned a reputation as a place where both seasoned professionals and up-and-coming performers can leave their mark. And that, according to owner Kate FitzGerald, is what helps give FitzGerald's the eclectic flair for which it has become famous. It is also why the club draws loyal patrons from throughout the Chicago area and why it has consistently been voted one of the area's best musical venues.

From folk to rock to jazz and blues, FitzGerald's touts one of the most versatile calendars in town. With music on most nights and prices ranging from \$8-\$15, it is an affordable entertainment option. A far cry from the early days when Bill FitzGerald used to scout out acts, now musicians clamor for the chance to book this classic

roadhouse bar. FitzGerald's has headlined some of Chicago's favorite bands like the Neville Brothers, Koko Taylor and Joe Ely. And for all the aspiring artists, they host a Tuesday night open mic that might just lead to a spot on their calendar.

The building that houses the club is an unassuming wooden clapboard-type structure that dates back to the 1920s. In its early days, it served as a hunting club and bar, and later in the 50s and 60s, as a popular jazz venue. Remodeled in the 1980s, the club still has a casual, unpretentious feel of an earlier era, whether set up in an intimate table and chairs setting or without furniture and opened up to an old-fashioned 300-person music hall.

FitzGerald's distinctive ambiance has led to cameo appearances in four Hollywood films, including *The Color of Money* in 1986, starring Paul Newman and Tom Cruise, and *A League of Their Own*, the 1992 movie about a woman's baseball team that featured another star-studded cast of Tom Hanks, Madonna, Geena

Davis and Rosie O'Donnell. For the filming of the latter, the club had to be closed for three weeks and still boasts the painted backdrop from the film.

The past few years have been a time of renovation and expansion for this popular venue. In 2002, the SideBar opened. A 1940's classic-style pub, patrons can enjoy the night spot without a cover charge and with a quieter area to sit and talk with room available for event rentals. And this spring, as FitzGerald's expands its outdoor patio and beer garden, it will also be teaming up with new restaurant neighbors Wishbone to offer carry-out every day of the week. Until then, enjoy the club's Sunday night Southern-style buffet from 5 to 8 p.m.

For everyone's benefit, as of the first of the year, FitzGerald's is now a smoke-free venue. The club is open six days a week and closed most Mondays. Wheelchair accessible and with ample parking, FitzGerald's is located at 6615 Roosevelt Road in Berwyn. For more information, visit [www.fitzgeraldsnightclub.com](http://www.fitzgeraldsnightclub.com) or call 708 788-2118.



### FitzGerald's Nightclub

6615 Roosevelt Road, Berwyn  
708 788-2118

**Hours:** Open Tuesday through Saturday at 7 p.m., and Sunday at 5 p.m. Closed Mondays.

**Upcoming Shows:** Thur, Jan 11, 9 p.m. Thomas Pace Band; Fri, Jan 12, 9 p.m. Corky Siegel & Randy Sabien, \$20; Jan 12 & 13, Fri-Sat 9:30 p.m. CJ Chenier & His Red Hot Louisiana Band, \$12-\$15; Sun, Jan 14, 6 p.m. Bill O'Connell's Big Band, \$8; Wed, Jan 17, 8 p.m. Leon Redbone, \$20; Thur, Jan 18, 9 p.m. Knot Without, \$6; Fri, Jan 19, 9 p.m. Beausoleil, \$15.