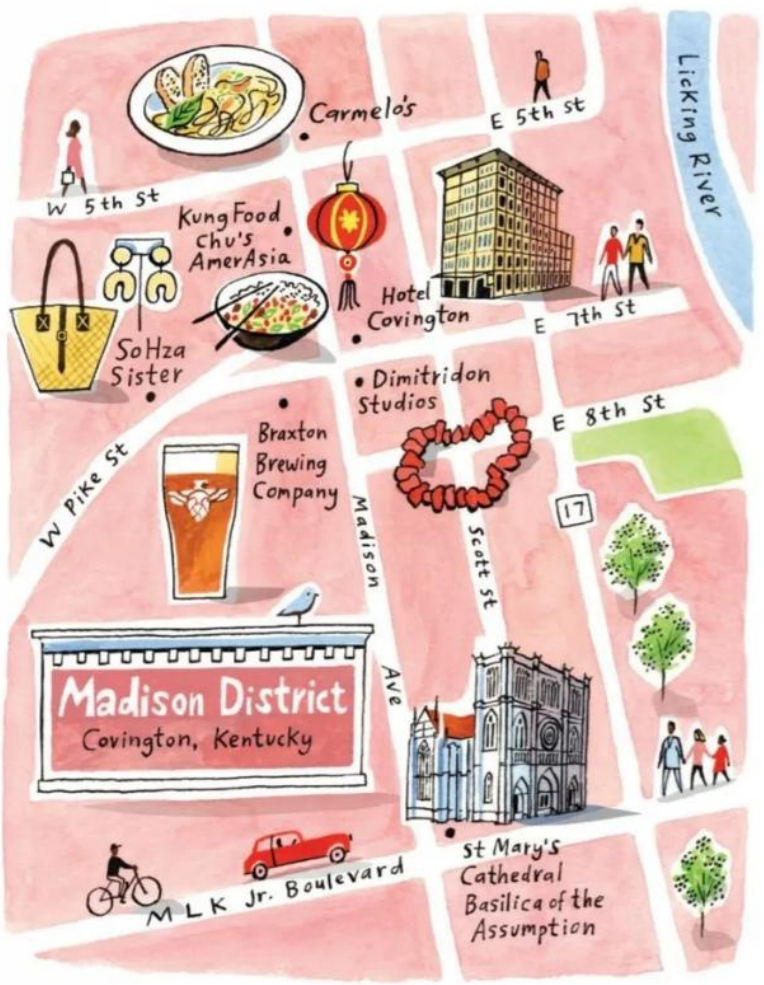

Madison District, Covington, Kentucky

BY ROBIN ROENKER • MAP ILLUSTRATION BY SARAH MCMENEMY

Its days as a bustling manufacturing center and riverboat port still echo through Covington, which was incorporated in 1815 where the Licking River flows into the Ohio. Connected to Cincinnati by the picturesque Roebling Suspension Bridge—a prototype for its more famous counterpart in Brooklyn—the city's downtown includes a vibrant mashup of restaurants and shops where decades-old, family-owned hardware and sporting goods stores sit alongside lavish boutique hotels and trendy wine and bourbon bars. Storefronts in the town's lively Madison District have repurposed their preserved architectural charm to welcome a new wave of patrons on the hunt for great food and fashionable finds.

SETTLE IN

Wind down at the sophisticated **Hotel Covington**, whose stylish hubs—the chandelier-lit Coppin's Restaurant + Bar and the swanky, cocktail-focused Knowledge Bar & Social Room—make it easy to see and be seen.

CRYSTAL CLEAR

A fun stop for rock, gem, and mineral hounds, **Dimitridon Studios** offers affordable rock-chip bracelets and necklaces, carved animal figurines, and a rainbow of crystals that, depending on the type, promise to soothe, protect, or energize.

BOHO CHIC

Sales of eye-catching, fair-trade purses, jewelry, and sustainable fashion at **SoHza Sister Boutique** support the work of female artisans around the world and benefit a network of local women's charities.

ICONIC LANDMARK

Marvel at the beauty of **St. Mary's Cathedral Basilica of the Assumption**, where ornate stained glass, intricate mosaics, and soaring Gothic-inspired design invite personal reflection. Constructed between 1894 and 1915, the church is often dubbed "America's Notre Dame."

COMFORT FOOD

Part upscale restaurant and part neighborhood gathering spot, **Carmelo's** has packed in the crowds since opening last year, thanks to its modern twists on traditional Italian favorites like mushroom marsala, fettuccine alfredo, and oxtail ragu.

ROOFTOP HANG

Raise a glass at **Braxton Brewing Co.**, where the taproom and third-floor rooftop patio feature 27 rotating housemade beers. Standout bestsellers include Tropic Flare IPA and Storm golden cream ale.

COOL KITSCH

Kung fu movies on the above-bar TVs and hand-painted portraits of Bruce Lee and other legendary martial arts masters on the barstools lend a funky charm to **KungFood Chu's AmerAsia**, a local favorite for Asian fusion, including kung pao chicken and steamed dumplings.