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**Last call's a bit later**

New Year's Eve extension until 3 a.m. should serve bars well

By Erika D. Smith  
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When it comes to drinking, Sunday typically is a day of rest in Central Indiana.



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Could get busy: Having New Year's Eve on Sunday should be a boost for the Rathskeller Restaurant in the Athenaeum. "Having it on a night that's an off night is like a bonus," said Dan McMichael, who owns the Rathskeller. - ROB GOEBEL / The Star

**A NEW YEAR'S TWIST ON ALCOHOL RULES**

Here are legal hours to sell alcoholic beverages in Indiana.

**GENERAL**

- **Monday through Saturday:** 7 a.m. to 3 a.m.
- **Sunday:** 10 a.m. to 12:30 a.m. (restaurants and bars that hold valid retailers' permits).

**HOLIDAY SALES**

- **Sunday:** Restaurants and bars can serve alcohol until 3 a.m.; carryout is prohibited. (Liquor stores are closed on Sundays.)
- **Monday (New Year's Day):** No liquor sales for off-premises consumption (carryout sales).

**Sources:** Indiana Alcohol and Tobacco Commission; Burns Indiana Statutes.

Well, not this Sunday.

It's New Year's Eve, and bars that usually aren't open on Sundays -- much less past midnight -- will serve alcohol as late as 3 a.m. Monday. Last call's normally 12:30 a.m.

"There will be a lot of places that are open this Sunday that aren't generally open," said Brad Klopfenstein, executive director of the Indiana Licensed Beverage Association, a lobbying group for bar owners. "This is like getting an extra Saturday night -- maybe even better."

Bars in Broad Ripple that never get customers on Sundays, including the Tuesday-through-Saturday Mineshaft Saloon, are booked with private parties on New Year's Eve. Others, including Rock Lobster, are expecting large crowds of revelers to dole out money for drink specials.

Bars along Massachusetts Avenue and elsewhere Downtown are planning for a big night, too.

The Rathskeller Restaurant in the Athenaeum expects to sell 600 tickets at \$50 a pop for its dinner and dancing party. Last year, when New Year's Eve fell on a Saturday, sales were about the same as usual. But the Rathskeller is busy on Saturdays anyway.

"Having it on a night that's an off night is like a bonus," said Dan McMichael, who owns the Rathskeller.

Another bonus will be Sunday's Indianapolis Colts game.

The home game against the Miami Dolphins, which was pushed back from 1 p.m. to 4:15 p.m., will give many people another reason to come Downtown. They may even stick around until midnight, said Spencer Valentine, proprietor of Spencer's Stadium Tavern on South West Street.

"If they win, I kind of expect some people to spend their New Year's (at the tavern)," he said. "If the Colts lose, they may get something to eat and go on to their other New Year's plans."

"You throw that together with New Year's and who knows what will come out of it," he added.

With its proximity to the RCA Dome, Spencer's gets good business on Sundays anyway -- especially if it's a Colts game day. But the ability to serve alcohol until 3 a.m., instead of the regular 12:30 a.m., is likely to make business even better, he said.

That extension almost didn't happen.

Normally on Sundays under Indiana liquor law bars and restaurants have to stop selling alcohol at 12:30 a.m. The rest of the week, last call isn't until 3 a.m.

Carryout sales of beer, wine and liquor still are banned on Sunday, as well as Monday, which is New Year's Day.

"You would've only had a half-hour of celebrating New Year's, then you're done," said Robin Poindexter, a major with the Indiana State Excise Police.

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For bar owners, that just wouldn't do.

"I looked at the calendar," Klopfenstein said. "I said: 'New Year's Eve is on a Sunday. We've got to change that.' "

**Call Star reporter Erika D. Smith at (317) 444-6424.**

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