

# D Hoffman DECADES

FALL/WINTER 2012

## HARTFORD'S TOP 40 IN HISTORY

Romanced by the  
Audi R8 4.2  
quattro Coupe

Page 25





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# Hoffman DECADES

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*By Sharon Burke*

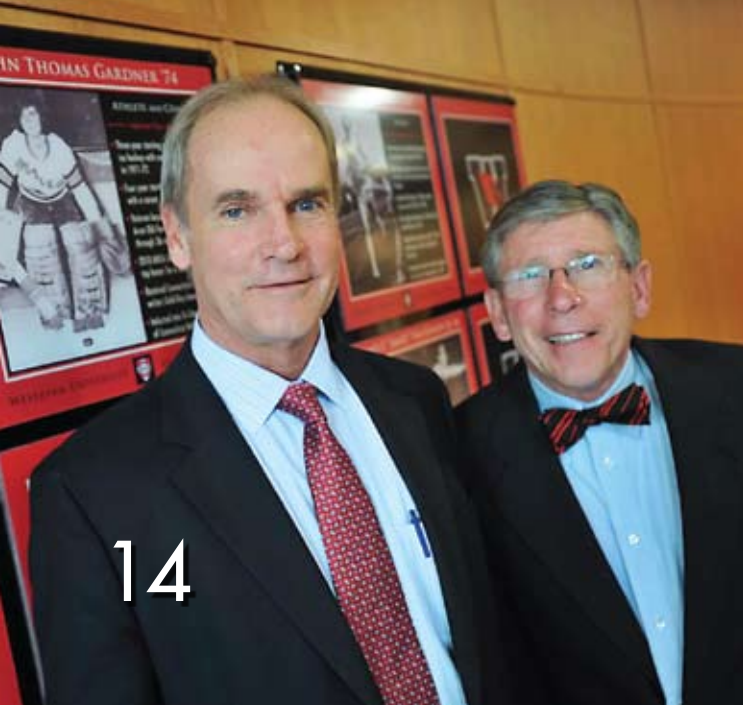
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### HAPPENINGS

Greater Hartford Fall/Winter Calendar of Events

On the cover:

Our top 40 news stories in Hartford's history is an entertaining mix of the recent, the historic and the almost forgotten.



WELCOME TO OUR Fall/Winter issue of *Decades!*

This is the time of year when you notice that the days are shortening and the nights are growing longer and chillier. It's the season to get out your fall wardrobe, your car scrapers, your rakes and leaf blowers, and make sure you can locate your hats, scarves and gloves. It's a good time to pick apples, to can or pickle fruits and vegetables, and before long, to start looking for the best pumpkins. Can Thanksgiving, and even Christmas, be far away?

In Connecticut, we have plenty to be thankful about. We're thankful about the Arthritis Foundation, New England Region which reminds us that arthritis not only affects numerous adults but is the most prevalent childhood disease after asthma. Food & style writer Todd Lyon tells you all about the coming Docs, Dine & Wine fundraiser, which will honor top local arthritis doctors and feature prominent area chefs.

And we're certainly thankful about Fidelco, a nonprofit organization whose mission is the breeding, socializing and training of guide dogs, which it then places with appropriate clients. As contributor Sharon Burke's story illustrates, humans aren't the only heroes.

Check out our Snapshots page for a few other things we're thankful for.

We're also appreciative of long-time varsity hockey coach John Gardner, who's had unprecedented success in his 37 seasons at Avon Old Farms. Ellis Parker interviews his latest prodigy, Jonathan Quick, the LA Kings goaltender whose championship performance and Conn Smythe trophy remind us that Connecticut is a real hotbed of high school hockey.

We also express appreciation for Infinity Music Hall & Bistro in Norfolk, which schedules terrific musical acts in an intimate setting and offers concertgoers a multicultural menu of great food in the same beautiful building. Music writer Christopher Arnott shows us that intimate is infinitely preferable.

Arnott also takes a top 40 approach to our cover story on Hartford history, revisiting some of the Capital City's best and worst moments. Ready to hear about Hartford's NFL days or when the circus came to town? Ready Arnott, here we come!

If you've been good this year, there may be something for you on our Details page of the latest car gadgets. And if you've been very very good, Santa may even have something really special for you—and it won't fit in your stocking or be easy to gift wrap. Our car reviewer, Ellis Parker, takes 14 of the sexiest cars in the Hoffman Auto portfolio for a spin, and Parker takes an extended look at and lavishes real praise on the gorgeous Audi R8.

So we hope you enjoy this issue. We're thankful for your continued loyalty and support.



PHOTO BY LANNY NAGLER

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Jeffrey S. Hoffman  
Co-Chairman

*I. Bradley Hoffman*

I. Bradley Hoffman  
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## Hoffman DECADES

VOLUME VII, Number 2

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## DETAILS

By Robert Bailin

### DASH: The Smartphone Car Stereo

Have you ever wanted to take advantage of the countless features of your iPhone—music, GPS, phone calls—in your car, but don't have an auxiliary jack? Devium has just the solution: The Dash is a double DIN in-dash car stereo replacement that is compatible with any iPhone or iPod Touch. The sleek four-inch-by-seven-inch faceplate connects your phone with the Dash stereo and charges it while docked. Besides music, cell phone calls and navigation apps will be heard clearly through your car's speakers utilizing Bluetooth

connectivity. The only control is a volume knob—all other features are controlled by apps using your iPhone's touchscreen. The Dash's four-inch-deep head unit supplies 50 watts per channel to power your front and rear speakers. Devium supplies free apps to organize your car-centric phone features in landscape mode. The Dash faceplate comes in either black plastic or CNC aluminum to best match your car's interior. Faceplates for Android and Windows phones are in the works. \$349–\$399. [www.devium.com](http://www.devium.com).



### Vehicle Safeguard Video Recording Camera

Record the conditions of the road, weather, and traffic directly from your dashboard. Supply objective and direct evidence to insurance companies and law enforcement, if needed. The Vehicle Safeguard will supply you with peace of mind as you navigate your way through streets and highways.

Installation is a snap. Use 12V DC power through the cigarette lighter or four AAA batteries. Secure the cradle to the dashboard and place the main recording unit inside the cradle. Use on anything from a 128MB to 2GB SD memory card to store up to 5 hours of recordings.

Video is recorded in AVI format, which is compatible with any PC. The best part is that the next scenic drive you take can also be captured on video. Not only do you get to experience safety while driving, but you also get to relive those scenic drives you take on the way to your favorite getaway. \$39.95. [www.gadgetuniverse.com](http://www.gadgetuniverse.com).

### Brica Day And Night Light Musical Auto Mirror

Safely see your baby while traveling whether it's daylight or dark with this day and night musical auto mirror. The large, crash-tested convex mirror allows for great wide-angle viewing of your rear-facing infant. At night you are still able to see your infant because of the remote controlled "night light." When the remote is pressed the light will gradually intensify, illuminate for 10 seconds, then fade back out so as not to disturb your sleeping baby. This mirror also has 3 remote-activated soothing melodies to help calm baby when riding.

Mirror has four attachment options to a rear seat head restraint or built-in car seat anchors to securely fit most vehicles. Uses 3 AA batteries (mirror) and 3 AAA batteries (remote). \$25.29. [www.brica.com/musical\\_mirror/](http://www.brica.com/musical_mirror/).



### Kiwi Bluetooth Car to Smartphone Connection

Kiwi Bluetooth from PLX Devices is a plug and play automotive tool that connects through the onboard diagnostic port (OBDII) found under the driver's dashboard in all cars made from 1996 to the present. Kiwi Bluetooth installs in seconds to interface with your car's computer and connect with your Android phone's wireless Bluetooth connection. The Kiwi Bluetooth allows you to efficiently monitor your car's MPG, analyze the log, diagnose trouble codes and monitor real-time engine performance. It is compatible with aftermarket apps such as Torque, Dash Command, OBDroid and VoyagerDash to give you a slew of virtual gauges for temperature, fuel level, RPM, load, and a host of other performance and emissions data, all displayed in living color on your Android's display screen. All applications are downloaded through the Android market. Some apps may need to be purchased separately from the Kiwi Bluetooth. \$99. Also available: Kiwi 2 for iPhone, iPod Touch and iPad. \$119. [www.plxdevices.com](http://www.plxdevices.com).





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## HOT LAPS FOR HOFFMAN

In August, Hoffman Porsche provided its customers with a serious dose of adrenaline during an outing to nearby Lime Rock Park. Customers were given the opportunity to test out their Hoffman Porsche vehicles on this famous 1.5-mile track. The entire park was closed down for Hoffman's exclusive use, which provided patrons with a premier environment in which to fully test out and witness the performance capabilities of their Porsches. Drivers spent the day enjoying a catered breakfast and lunch, receiving driving instruction from professional racecar drivers, and best of all – driving many hot laps around the track!

Pictured: Hoffman Porsche customers Kyriakos Perdakis and David Peck taking a break from the racetrack.



## HOFFMAN AUDI QUATTRO CUP

In July, Hoffman Audi of East Hartford and Hoffman Audi of New London hosted their first annual Audi quattro Cup tournament at the exclusive Hartford Golf Club. Audi of America's quattro Cup is the largest amateur golf tournament in the world. In August, winners of the Hoffman tournament, Jim Healey of West Hartford and Jeff Troian of North Granby, competed in the U.S. Final at the unrivaled Pebble Beach Resort. In addition to the tournament being the auto group's first ever quattro Cup, the competition made Hoffman history with an astounding car-winning hole-in-one.

Pictured (left to right): Jeff Troian and Jim Healey, winners of Hoffman Audi's first annual quattro Cup tournament.



## SPECIAL OLYMPICS

This summer, Special Olympics Connecticut had a new presence on the road, courtesy of the Hoffman Auto Group. Hoffman Auto Group's donation of a Ford E150 cargo van to Special Olympics met a crucial need at a critical time – just before the Summer Games – and will truly impact the organization for years to come. In addition to transporting equipment and athletes, the van also aims to inspire greater awareness and increased participation in the Special Olympics program. It is the first of its kind nationwide to be wrapped with the new Special Olympics logo.

Pictured (left to right): Beau Doherty, president of Special Olympics Connecticut; Matthew S. Hoffman, vice president of Hoffman Auto Group; Jeffrey S. Hoffman, co-chairman of Hoffman Auto Group; I. Bradley Hoffman, co-chairman of Hoffman Auto Group; Dan Widing, Special Olympics athlete; Chris Renstrom, vice president corporate relations and special events for Special Olympics Connecticut; Jamaine Johnson, Special Olympics athlete; Nancy Scirocco, Special Olympics Connecticut board of directors member; Laurie-Jean Hannon, vice president of games and sports development for Special Olympics Connecticut.

## 2013 LEXUS ES

In September, Hoffman Auto Group celebrated the launch of the all-new 2013 Lexus ES. The Hoffman Lexus showroom was transformed with the additions of live acoustic music, bistro tables, food and beverages, fresh flowers and an ice sculpture. Customers were able to witness up close what Lexus is calling "a stunning piece of technology." The 2013 ES is entirely new and incorporates technology that ES owners have never been able to witness before. Visit Hoffman Lexus to get a look at this model – tech couture has arrived!



## HOFFMAN NISSAN KICKS OFF 5TH ANNIVERSARY WITH THE 2013 ALTIMA

In July, Hoffman Nissan held the ultimate summer barbeque to celebrate its 5th anniversary. Customers enjoyed delectable cuisine prepared by The Meat House in Avon, as well as tasty frozen treats from an on-site ice cream truck. Entertainment was provided by Nickelodeon's hit cartoon character Diego, as well as face painting, and music by Royal Affairs. Hoffman Nissan also celebrated its anniversary by launching the newly redesigned 2013 Nissan Altima.

Pictured: The 2013 Nissan Altima with Diego, from Nick Jr's hit show Go, Diego, Go!



## GOODSPEED GALA

In August, Goodspeed Musicals honored the Hoffman Auto Group with the Goodspeed Musicals Arts & Business Partnership Award. The award was put in place to recognize that local businesses play a critical role in the wellbeing of our communities, especially when they support the arts. "Hoffman's leadership in supporting the arts reminds us that our state is a better place when businesses and arts organizations work together to improve our communities," said Michael Price, executive director of Goodspeed Musicals. The Goodspeed also honored Emmy and Tony-Award winner Kristin Chenoweth the same night for her outstanding contribution to musical theatre.

Pictured (left to right): Jeffrey S. Hoffman, co-chairman Hoffman Auto Group; Nancy Hoffman; Phyllis Hoffman; Monica Hoffman; Matthew S. Hoffman, vice president of Hoffman Auto Group



## HOFFMAN COLLEGE COUNSELING CENTER

This fall, Suffield Academy opened its doors to the Hoffman College Counseling Center. The new facility will help ensure that all Suffield students have support with the college search process, starting with freshmen year and continuing throughout their entire experience on campus. The space will make it possible to provide college counseling on an individual level with extensive programming. The center was made possible by several generous Suffield parents, but named in recognition of a lead gift from trustee Kathy Hoffman and her husband, I. Bradley Hoffman, co-chairman of Hoffman Auto Group.

Pictured (left to right): I. Bradley Hoffman, co-chairman of Hoffman Auto Group; Kathy Hoffman, member of Suffield Academy Board of Trustees; Dan Tisch, president of Suffield Academy Board of Trustees; Charles Cahn III; head master of Suffield Academy.



## HOFFMAN FORD CELEBRATES 50 YEAR MILESTONE

In September, Hoffman Ford celebrated their 50th anniversary. This milestone was particularly special to the auto group because Ford is at its roots! The automotive group originally started with a Ford franchise in 1921; the current Ford franchise was acquired in 1962. Friends, customers, employees and family were welcomed into the Hoffman Ford showroom to reminisce about the past fifty years and dream big for the next fifty. The dealership has already started moving towards the future with the implementation of two new initiatives. Hoffman Ford is not only the sole fully certified electric dealer in the Greater Hartford area, but will also be opening its doors to include the recently acquired Lincoln franchise.

Pictured (left to right): Jeffrey S. Hoffman, co-chairman of Hoffman Auto Group; Hal Dewsnap, Boston regional manager of Ford Lincoln; I. Bradley Hoffman, co-chairman of Hoffman Auto Group; Matthew S. Hoffman, vice president of Hoffman Auto Group; Billy Genereux, general manager of Hoffman Ford.

[www.hoffmanauto.com](http://www.hoffmanauto.com)



## BCH GOLF CLASSIC

In June, the Hoffman Auto Group and Hoffman family were proud to host their 14th annual Burton C. Hoffman Golf Classic. The golf tournament was held at the picturesque Tumble Brook Country Club in remembrance of the auto group's second-generation owner, Burton C. Hoffman. The BCH Classic has raised over \$1,000,000 and all proceeds go to benefit the Connecticut Children's Medical Center. With support from the tournament, Connecticut Children's is able to create more private clinical care space, consultation rooms and areas for respite and play for families awaiting surgery and for children in recovery.

Pictured: Sons of Burton C. Hoffman and co-chairmen of the Hoffman Auto Group, Jeffrey S. Hoffman and I. Bradley Hoffman.

HOFFMAN DECADES ///7



# HARTFORD'S GREATEST HITS

## The Top 40 Stories in the City's Recorded History

Hartford history rocks. The city's significant milestones, spread out over several centuries, are a deft mix of classics, standards, new sounds and short sharp shocks that arise out of nowhere.

By Christopher Arnott

In compiling this list, we took an approach that was in some respects as broad as Broad Street and in others as narrow as the barrel of a Colt revolver.

For our survey, we decided to start our chart with when Hartford first had its own regularly published newspaper to record its own history, thus lopping off entire eras of human development (Pleistocene? Fooey!) and eschewing the couple of centuries wherein the city was discovered by Dutch explorers (in 1614), settled by the British (in 1635, as Newtown) and named Hartford (in 1637).

But the *Hartford Courant* is the oldest continuously published newspaper in the United States, giving us nearly 250 years of stories to draw from, which seemed plenty. So, for our purposes, Hartford's journalistic legacy begins a dozen years before the United States of America declared independence from Great Britain.

But should the American Revolution then be one of our top stories? No, we figured. It wasn't enough for Hartford to be swept up in the same national or international event that affected every city everywhere. Hartford had to be the lead player in these stories.

From there, like one of those great Big D 103 playlists back when the Hartford-based station had a Top 40 format, the list became a matter of taste and balance and harmony. There had to be room for selections that were upbeat, downtown and offbeat. Some standards, a novelty number or two, celebrations of subcultures and ethnic diversity, plus some hits which may be bubbling-under today but which just might make the all-time classics charts in the future.



It's quite a provocative playlist—the hottest and hippest highlights blend.

40. The Hartford Blues hike the ball (1926). The Blues exist as a National Football League team for a single season, with a 3-7 record.
39. Trinity College is founded, as Washington College (1764). It's the second oldest college in Connecticut, after Yale. The University of Hartford comes along about 200 years later, in 1957.
38. Nighttime parades lit with torches and fireworks are held by the Wide Awakes (1860). The abolitionist group holds the lively ceremonies to welcome Abraham Lincoln to town.
37. The first book in *The Hunger Games* trilogy is published (2008). Author Suzanne Collins is a Hartford native. Another bestselling fantasy novelist of the past decade who was born in Hartford: Stephenie Meyer of *Twilight* fame.
36. Pope Manufacturing Company starts building Columbia bicycles (1877). The company also makes automobiles and motorcycles for a time in the early 1900s, but it's Columbia bicycles (still an active brand name) for which the company is best remembered.
35. The Greater Hartford Festival of Jazz begins (1992). It's the largest free-admission jazz festival in New England.
34. Hartford's population grows by nearly 40,000 people (1910-1920). The growth spurt—from 98,915 to 138,036—equals what the entire population of the city was just 30 years earlier. In the mid-1940s, there's a large influx of Puerto Rican immigrants.
33. Hartford Stage starts sending shows to New York (1974). The well-regarded regional theater, founded in 1963, has been premiering new plays for its entire history, but *My Sister, My Sister* is the first one to move on to Broadway. Fifteen years later, *Other People's Money* is a substantial hit Off Broadway and is turned into a major motion picture. Over a dozen other Hartford Stage productions are subsequently seen at New York theaters.
32. The Hartford Dark Blues baseball team is founded (1874). The team is a charter member of the National League, and its owner Morgan Bulkeley is the first National League president. When the Dark Blues move to Brooklyn in 1877, they keep the name of their original home rather than the color of their uniforms in their new moniker, becoming the Brooklyn Hartfords.







31. The Wadsworth Atheneum hosts the inaugural performance of George Balanchine's New York City Ballet (1934). Visiting with his brand-new dance troupe is the great choreographer's way of thanking the museum for sponsoring his immigration from the Soviet Union a year earlier. This same year, the Atheneum world-premieres the Gertrude Stein/Virgil Thomson opera *Four Saints in Three Acts*.

30. In weather-related stories, the Great Blizzard of 1888 assaults Hartford from March 11th to 14th with 19-36 inches of snow and high sustained winds that create enormous snowdrifts and took roughly 400 lives across New England, yet the *Hartford Courant* manages to publish without interruption. The Connecticut River floods the city (1909). The water rises more than 24 feet over its low-water mark. Hartford is drenched again, as is New England in general, by the flood of 1936. In the 1940s, the Park River is buried by the Army Corps of Engineers to reduce flooding of the Capital. Nearly two decades after that, in 1955, a pair of hurricanes also cause substantial damage to the city.

29. The *Connecticut Courant* publishes its first edition (1764). It's strictly a weekly paper for nearly three-quarters of a century, becoming a daily in 1837. The state's largest daily paper, it wins Pulitzer Prizes in 1992 and 1999.

28. G. Fox department store opens (1847), a major cultural and community hub for well over a century. The building remains a Hartford landmark decades after the store closes in 1993.

27. *Yours Truly, Johnny Dollar* debuts on *CBS Radio* (1949). The gallivanting "man with the action-packed expense account" is an investigator for Hartford insurance companies, and single-handedly makes the industry seem sexy. The show runs for 12 years and over 800 episodes. The only entertainment program to come close to Johnny Dollar's impact on Hartford as the backdrop for adventure stories is the TV series *Judging Amy*, which runs from 1999 to 2005.

26. Constitution Plaza opens (1964). Construction takes two years, and knocks out the old Italian-American neighborhood known as Front Street. The first major step in Hartford's decade-long period of urban redevelopment, the area continues to invite revitalization projects in Hartford, recently including the Connecticut Convention Center and Connecticut Science Center.



25. Real Art Ways rebuilds. The scrappy progressive arts organization rides the performance art wave of the '80s and '90s, bringing controversial and provocative artists to Hartford and supporting a groundswell of underground local art. In 1996, RAW reinvents itself as an arthouse cinema and art gallery, while still bringing in live performers and maintaining its cutting-edge image.

24. The Hartford is acquired by ITT Corporation (1970). The purchase of the company founded in 1810 as the Hartford Fire Insurance Company marks the largest corporate takeover in U.S. history.

23. Hartford becomes Hartford (1788). The city is incorporated, along with four other still-formidable Connecticut cities—New Haven, New London, Norwich and Middletown.

22. Hartford gets its first insurance company (1810). The Hartford Fire Insurance Company arrives 18 years after the city's first bank. Mutual Insurance comes in 1831, and Phoenix and Aetna follow in the 1850s.

21. Thomas Gallaudet and Laurent Clerc found the American School for the Deaf (1817). (It is now the oldest school of its kind in the United States.) The ASD begins in Hartford but now has its campus in West Hartford, where it also hosts the National Theatre of the Deaf.

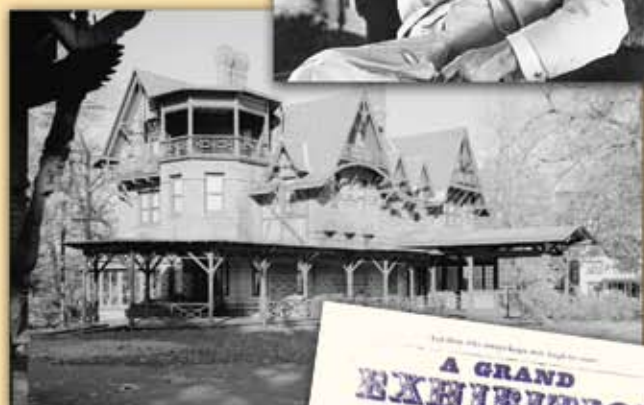
20. Steamboats enter the transportation mix (1815). They're followed 60 years later by former Mississippi River steamboat pilot Mark Twain.

19. The railroad line between Hartford and New Haven is completed (1838). Hartford's first steam railroad, it's the precursor of the New York, New Haven and Hartford line which runs from 1872 to 1968.

18. Dentist Horace Wells develops the use of nitrous oxide (a.k.a. laughing gas) as an anesthetic. There is a statue of Wells in Bushnell Park, and the American Dental Association honors him in 1864 as the founder of the modern anesthesia practice.

17. Steve Campo creates a mecca for non-profit arts groups. A savvy and cautious arts administrator, Campo builds up TheaterWorks (founded in 1985) into a powerhouse small theater bringing fresh productions of the latest Off Broadway hits to Hartford. He invests in a building and lets other local arts groups inhabit it as well.

16. Katharine Hepburn dies (2003). The Hartford-born actress is buried in Cedar Hill Cemetery.







15. Howard Stern begins his ascent as “King of All Media” (1979). The influential radio jock spends a year on air at WCCC-FM and develops some of the shtick he brings to later gigs in Detroit, Washington DC and ultimately New York. Stern leaves Hartford when WCCC won't give him a raise, and takes the station's overnight DJ Fred Norris with him.
14. Harriet Beecher Stowe moves to Hartford (1863). The novelist is already a nationally renowned abolitionist whose groundbreaking novel *Uncle Tom's Cabin* was published in 1855.
13. The Young Men's Institute Library is transformed into the free Hartford Public Library (1892). The institutional shift is made under the guidance of pioneering literacy activist Caroline Hewins.
12. The Hartford Whalers leave Hartford for Raleigh, North Carolina (1997). The city's efforts to keep the team in town with a new stadium and other incentives go for naught. So do repeated attempts to lure NFL football and other major sports.
11. Bushnell Park is completed (1868). It's the oldest publicly funded park in the U.S.
10. Sophie Tucker records her signature hit, “Some of These Days” (1911). The vaudeville superstar begins her career in Hartford at the turn of the century, singing in her parents' restaurant.
9. Hartford completes its new State Capitol building (1879). After a century of sharing General Assembly meetings with New Haven, Hartford becomes the sole state capital city.
8. Wallace Stevens wins the Pulitzer Prize for Poetry (1955). Stevens declines an offer to teach at Harvard because he doesn't want to leave his day-job as Vice President of The Hartford.
7. The Hartford Convention (1814): Concerned about how the national government is handling the War of 1812, the five New England states of the time get together, and entertain the thought of seceding from the United States.
6. The roof of the Hartford Civic Center collapses (1978). No one is injured. The accident, caused by accumulated snow and ice, happens just hours after a UConn/UMass basketball game. It takes years to rebuild the center, which is only three years old at the time but which still stands proudly today. It's renamed the XL Center in 2007.
5. Samuel Langhorne Clemens resides in Hartford (1874-91). Under his world-famous pen name of Mark Twain, Clemens pens *Huckleberry Finn*, *The Adventures of Tom Sawyer*, *Life on the Mississippi*, *A Connecticut Yankee in King Arthur's Court* and other



works at his home on Farmington Avenue. The building is now enshrined as the Mark Twain House and Museum.

4. Hitting the highways (1948-1970): At first, highway construction brings motorists conveniently toward Hartford from other states, via the Wilbur Cross Highway and other roads. I-84 is the project which transforms the city itself, displacing whole neighborhoods and dividing the downtown into distinct sections. The building of I-91 spans the 1960s, further impacting the area during a time of major urban renewal.
3. The Hartford Circus Fire (1944): Over 160 die and over 700 are injured at a performance of the Ringling Brothers and Barnum & Bailey circus when the show's tent catches fire. The tragic event creates the lasting mystery of unidentified child victim "Miss 1565," and leads to much stronger fire laws in the state, including the banning of big-top tents.
2. The UConn Huskies women's basketball team wins 90 games in a row (2008-09). The team, which plays many of its home games at the XL Center, enjoys the longest winning streak in the history of major team sports in North America.

*... and number one, with a bullet!:*

1. Samuel Colt receives a patent for his "revolving gun" (1836). The device revolutionizes the manufacture of firearms and helps define the Industrial Revolution. *H*



## Bubbling Under

Here are a few pick-hits that suggest future Hartford historical highlights.

The Hartford has undergone a major restructuring of financial services group, and put one of its office buildings up for sale.

Theater is changing in the city. Hartford Stage has a new artistic director, Darko Tresnjak (only the fifth such leader in the institution's nearly 50-year history). TheaterWorks is searching for the successor to its founder Steve Campo, who resigned this year due to health concerns.

The comeback of commuter rail. Rapid-speed rail from Hartford to New York and regular commuter daytime stops from New Haven to Hartford have been suggested for years. An unexpected new chapter in the glorious history of rails in Hartford.

Major sports teams? Wanted and needed. The fans are waiting breathlessly.



# The Ever-Growing Legend of Avon Old Farms Hockey Coach John Gardner

By Ellis Parker



Jim Calhoun recently retired from coaching the UConn men's basketball team after 26 years and three national championships, an extraordinary example of program building considering UConn's relatively modest prior history. Was he the dean of Connecticut coaches?

With seven national championships in 27 years after taking over a program with only one winning season, the accomplishments of UConn women's basketball coach Geno Auriemma arguably even exceed Calhoun's (although fairness would require noting there's more parity in the men's game). During one stretch, Auriemma's teams reeled off a record 90 consecutive wins. Auriemma also coached the 2012 women's Olympic basketball team which won the gold. Is he the dean of Connecticut coaches?

In his 16 years, Trinity College squash coach Paul Assaiante presided over 13 consecutive national championship teams from 1999-2011 before Yale ended his streak of 252 consecutive wins and Princeton took the national title later in the season. Is he the dean of Connecticut coaches?

In late 2008, a few months after his 600th win at Avon Old Farms, the *New England Hockey Journal* labeled hockey coach John T. Gardner "The Dean." (Ironically, because Gardner doubles as the preparatory school's provost, any deans would probably report to him.) More frequently, you'll find the adjective "legendary" in front of his name.

Legendary is no overstatement, but since Gardner is alive and well and entering his 38th season as Avon Old Farms hockey coach, that would make Gardner a living legend. Prep school service was in his bloodline—his father taught at Salisbury School, which Gardner attended. Gardner then matriculated at Wesleyan University in Middletown, playing hockey, baseball and football until a shoulder injury caused him to drop football (New England Patriots coach Bill Belichick was his contemporary at Wesleyan). He majored in psychology, which undoubtedly has come in handy.

I caught up with Gardner in the Avon Old Farms provost's office, from which it's a short but head-clearing walk to Jennings-Fairfield Rink. Although I had only recently graduated from Hamden High School 37 years ago when Gardner began coaching the Winged Beavers, it struck



me that the handsome, self-possessed coach hardly appeared older than I and looked like he could still lead a breakaway. My mind flashed for an instant to Gordie Howe, who came out of retirement to help the Hartford Whalers to the playoffs when he was in his 50s.

"Do you still get out there and fire away at the net?" I ask.

"No," Gardner says modestly, "but I still put on skates and shuffle around the ice."

In those 37 years, Gardner assembled a coaching record unrivaled by any of his contemporaries. In the last 25 years, Avon Old Farms won eight New England Division I championships and nine Founder's League championships. Gardner is the president of the New England Prep Hockey Coaches Association. Along the way, he has assembled a staggering 632 wins.

But it's not just how Gardner's teams have performed that have earned him labels like "the dean" and "legendary." Perhaps even more telling is how his former student athletes have performed (and how they generally have carried themselves) after they have left his program. No other prep school even comes close to the post-graduation successes of Gardner's student athletes.

The Conn Smythe Trophy goes to the MVP of the NHL playoffs. The list of past winners is a who's who of professional hockey, many needing only a last name to be instantly recognizable—Gretzky, Orr, Bossy, Lafleur, Dryden, Messier, Trottier, Niedermayer, Lidstrom, Roy, Yzerman and Lemieux (Mario and Claude). Note that only three American-born hockey players have won the Conn Smythe trophy. Gardner coached two of them—I I-time NHL All Star Brian Leetch and first-time All Star Jonathan Quick. (Tim Thomas of the Boston Bruins is the third.)

Numerous players Gardner has coached have gone on to successful collegiate, Olympic and/or professional careers. David Roberts, Matt Martin and Quick represented the United States in Olympic play. Nearly a score of Gardner's disciples have played in the NHL, approaching the success of Calhoun or Auriemma. Leetch, of course, is enshrined in the NHL Hall of Fame. Matt Moulson is with the New York Islanders, Chris Higgins with the Vancouver Canucks, Cam Atkinson with the Columbus Blue Jackets, Nick Bonino

with the Anaheim Ducks. Matt Lashoff plays in Switzerland, Niko Dimitrakos plays in Sweden. The list of Gardner protégés who have taken his prep pipeline to the pros goes on and on.

The American talent level is continuing to gain on the rest of the hockey world, says Gardner. NHL scouts are at Avon Old Farms all of the time, sometimes as many as 10 at once. Unfortunately, adds Gardner ruefully, that level of success also means agents.

Besides agents, is there anything else Gardner would change about the culture of hockey if he had the power, I ask. "Definitely the fighting," he answers. "I just attended an all-day seminar on head injuries, which are a major issue and have finally come to the forefront of concern."

Quick's breakthrough season as netminder of the LA Kings is merely the most recent reminder of what an exceptional developer of

Quick's emergence notwithstanding, it's not as if Avon Old Farms is just a hockey factory or places undue emphasis on athletics. Gardner's multiple roles there illustrate the kind of balance the school encourages. The hockey coach not only doubles as provost but triples as an admissions officer and has previously served as a math teacher, athletics director, football coach and baseball coach at the school. The school also places real emphasis on the arts and music. One of its most famous alums is singer/songwriter/activist Pete Seeger, a 1936 graduate. Kristian Bush, musician and member of the country music duo Sugarland, is a 1988 graduate.

But Avon Old Farms students don't have to excel in sports or the arts. "They may make you proud in other areas of endeavor," Gardner says. "You teach them about life and try to demonstrate character traits that will serve them well."

*"Do you still get out there and fire away at the net?" I ask.  
"No," Gardner says modestly, "but I still put on skates  
and shuffle around the ice."*

talent Gardner has been over the years. In the Stanley Cup Finals, Quick allowed just seven goals in six games, stopping 125 out of 132 shots (with two of the seven finding the net after deflecting off teammate Slava Voynov). His playoff numbers are among the best in NHL history. He was also the runner-up for the Vezina Trophy (awarded by vote of the NHL coaches to the best goalie) for keeping the LA Kings competitive even though they were last in the NHL in scoring for much of the season. He seemingly willed the LA Kings to their first NHL championship, something not even The Great One was able to do. The Conn Smythe is the exclamation point on a season in which Quick had 35 wins, a 1.95 goals-against-average, and a franchise record 10 shutouts while playing for the NHL's second most anemic offense. Yet characteristic of a Gardner athlete, Quick has been resistant to praise, deflecting it onto his teammates whenever possible.

Founded in 1927, Avon Old Farms seems an idyllic place to learn about life. The buildings and grounds are beautiful, more impressive than many college campuses. The English Tudor architecture was designed by founder Theodate Pope Riddle, an RMS *Lusitania* survivor and Connecticut's first licensed female architect. Construction materials include brick, local sandstone and slate shipped from upstate New York. Riddle chose a winged beaver for the mascot, with the accompanying motto "Aspirando et Perseverando"—aspire and persevere.

As Gardner describes Avon Old Farms, it's like a small community or college. The majority of the faculty are residential. There are 400 students, 300 of which are boarders and 100 of which are day students. Unlike some prep schools, Avon Old Farms admits only a few postgraduates. It's not something Gardner's really into for hockey, because postgrads would take playing time away from

# Jonathan Quick Interview

By Ellis Parker

## Hockey Standout from Avon Old Farms Class of 2005



We caught up with Jonathan Quick, 26-year-old goaltender for the L.A. Kings during their first NHL championship, 2012 winner of the Conn Smythe award, and recipient of a new 10-year contract extension starting in the 2013-2014 season worth a reported \$58 million, at his home in Los Angeles on the eve of the lockout.

**Q:** I'm writing a piece about Avon Old Farms hockey coach John Gardner. Obviously, you're his latest success story. What does Mr. Gardner mean to you? Coach? Authority figure? Father figure? Friend?

**A:** You've kind of got it all, depending on the situation. Obviously, coach most of all. These days we joke around a little more, though.

**Q:** Tell me something most people don't know about John Gardner?

**A:** There's nothing hidden about him. He certainly won't beat around the bush with you. He also cares a whole lot.

**Q:** You played some hockey at Hamden High School, then enrolled at Avon Old Farms. Was prep school much of an adjustment?

**A:** I was lucky to have a couple of guys there who I had always played hockey with. There's still a bit of an adjustment.

**Q:** Were your years at Avon Old Farms good ones?

**A:** Oh, yeah.

**Q:** Growing up in Connecticut, what professional sports teams did you root for?

**A:** I was a Giants fan and a Rangers fan. Lately, I root for the Dodgers in baseball.

**Q:** Were you a hockey specialist or a multisport athlete?

**A:** Multisport. I played football, baseball and lacrosse in addition to hockey.

**Q:** I should know this, but what college did you attend?

**A:** UMass.

**Q:** Oh, goodness! My school (Michigan) and yours are playing football later this afternoon. I'd actually like to see the UMass program rise as UConn's has, but I don't think they have the talent level to stay in this particular game.

**A:** They do get some talent. (New York Giants receiver) Victor Cruz was there when I was.

**Q:** Your wife Jaclyn, I understand, is from Greenwich. How did the two of you meet?

**A:** I played hockey with her brother (Sean Backman, of the Bridgeport Sound Tigers, the top farm team for the New York Islanders) growing up.

**Q:** Was your wife an athlete too?

**A:** She played field hockey in college.

**Q:** Was there a particular moment when you knew in your heart that you were going to enjoy an NHL career?

**A:** Not really. You just keep going up the levels. In prep school, you hope to play hockey in college. In college, you hope to play on some sort of pro team. You just keep moving up the chain.

**Q:** What means more to you: the Conn Smythe Trophy or the Stanley Cup?

**A:** Definitely the cup. It's the trophy you grew up dreaming about. It's the coolest trophy in any sport.

**Q:** You have a sweet 10-year contract extension—where do you see your career going?

**A:** I just set my goals one year at a time, try to prepare.

**Q:** I think of goalie as a position that, like catcher in baseball, can wear people down physically. What do you do to stay fit and avoid injuries?

**A:** I have a training regimen I follow. I think everyone has his own routine.

**Q:** You recently underwent minor surgery upon your back. What's the prognosis?

**A:** You have to be patient to let things heal. It's coming along. I'm just taking it day to day, trying to get it back to 100 percent. Usually, I'd be getting ready for camp now.

**Q:** Have you gotten to know (retired hockey great) Brian Leetch?

**A:** Brian got my phone number from John Gardner and sent text messages congratulating me after the Stanley Cup Finals. We were supposed to do John's summer hockey camp on the same day, but it didn't happen.

**Q:** Do you like working with youths?

**A:** Absolutely. I do a camp of my own in Stamford (the Jon Quick all ages Goaltending Camp at Stamford Twin Rinks).

**Q:** What else do you do to give back? Do you have any charitable causes that you'd like to give some publicity to?

**A:** I support the Wounded Warrior Project. Also, my brother-in-law Matt Moulson and I set up The 326 Foundation to benefit The Islanders Children's Foundation and The Kings Care Foundation. I donate \$500 for each of my team's wins and he donates \$500 for every goal he scores for the New York Islanders.

**Q:** In Hamden, you're now revered with other favored sons like Ernest Borgnine and Dwayne "The Rock" Johnson. Do you miss anything about living in Connecticut, and if so, what?

**A:** Definitely. I miss my friends there, the seasons, Italian food in general, good pizza in particular.

**Q:** What do most people not realize about you?

**A:** I don't know. I just go out and do my job.



the students he's developing and diminish their incentive to grow. The school strives for diversity, giving out a great deal of financial aid so it doesn't just have children of the top 1% attending.

Although founded by a woman, Avon Old Farms is an all-boys school. "They're kids," Gardner muses, "sometimes exhilarating, sometimes frustrating. All boys want to do is fit in and not be embarrassed. Single sex education is good for boys because it removes all the distractions." They still see female role models on campus and can socialize at times with girls from Miss Porter's School in Farmington and The Ethel Walker School in Simsbury.

Ever the psychologist, Gardner identified Quick early as extremely competitive, a bit immature and a risk-taker. During his first season in the pros, Quick managed to get demoted to a less glamorous league after sleeping through a meeting with a coach. He has learned a thing or two along the way. The Quick we see now is one who mostly avoids the media and chooses his words carefully when addressing his recent success. Yet some of his brashness still leaks



through, as in a brief, F-bomb-laden television appearance at a Stanley Cup celebration at the Staples Center broadcast live and unbleeped on *NBC*. But overall, the 26-year-old husband and father seems to have things pretty well in hand.

"How was it coaching Quick?" I ask.

"He loved playing here and being at the

school," Gardner answers. "He bought into the system. Now he's gone on to perform on a bigger stage."

By the time Quick left Avon Old Farms, his talent was obvious. "The only person, Quickie, who can stop you is you," Gardner remembers telling him. It seems one of his beavers has found his wings. **H**

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# Docs, Dine and Wine

## Physicians' Award Celebrity Chef Dinner

By Todd Lyon

When I. Bradley Hoffman joined forces with the Arthritis Foundation more than 25 years ago, he hadn't a clue that one day he'd need both of his hips replaced. An athletic man and the consummate go-getter – he's Co-Chairman of the Hoffman Auto Group in East Hartford — he had suddenly experienced back pain after a vigorous hockey game. “I was 46 years old,” he recalls, “and when my doctor said it was arthritis in my hips I thought he was joking.”

His surgery took place at the Connecticut Joint Replacement Institute in December of 2011; by June of 2012, he was on the golf course, smoothly navigating 18 holes. “Before my surgery, by the second or third hole I'd be walking like I was 100 years old,” says Hoffman. “My game still isn't great, but now I have no excuses.” Well, one excuse might be that he is especially busy in his work as co-chair of the second annual Docs, Dine and Wine Physicians' Award Celebrity Chef Dinner, a major fundraising event to benefit the research, education and outreach programs of the New England Regional Chapter of the Arthritis Foundation.

Joint replacement is a modern miracle, but it's only one of the stunning advances that have been achieved with the help of the Arthritis Foundation – which was founded in 1948 and is the largest and oldest organization of its kind. Modern biologic drugs (such as Enbrel) have given the gift of mobility to millions of children and adults suffering with rheumatoid arthritis, and researchers at Yale University made medical history when they developed a vaccine against Lyme Disease,

another devastating type of arthritis. And yet, arthritis – including gout, lupus, fibromyalgia and nearly 100 other variations – remains the number one cause of disability in this country.

“One in five adults in the United States has some form of arthritis,” explains Jaime Seltzer, Vice President of Philanthropy at the Arthritis Foundation/New England Region, headquartered in Rocky Hill. Statistically, it's ahead of heart disease, diabetes and cancer, and its numbers are on the rise, thanks in part to the aging Baby Boomer population. Yet, she stresses, arthritis is not just an “old person's disease.” In fact, two-thirds of people with arthritis are under the age of 65. This group includes Hoffman, who is 52, as well as a nine-year-old West Hartford soccer phenom who has uveitis in his eyes due to arthritis, and has undergone several surgeries, including one for glaucoma.



“Arthritis is the most prevalent childhood disease after asthma,” says Seltzer. “It's three times more prevalent than childhood diabetes, and it can be fatal, especially if it develops in the lungs or heart.”



## The 2012 Honorees

*Dinner promises to be an unforgettable feast: chefs from six top Connecticut restaurants will each prepare and present a course, resulting in a lavish meal entirely donated by the chefs and their restaurants.*

A summer camp for children with arthritis and a retreat for teens with the disease are just a few of the Foundation's programs that help this vulnerable population. These kid-friendly gatherings are made possible by the success of fundraisers like the Docs, Dine and Wine Physicians' Award Celebrity Chef Dinner.

The event, which takes place on Friday, October 26th, is big -- 300 people at a sit-down dinner -- and bursting with energy, talent and good will. Seltzer expects the ballroom to be overflowing with physicians, families, colleagues and the charitable corporate community. Over the course of the evening, there will be a silent auction, featuring such tempting prizes as fine wines, tickets to sporting events and restaurant experiences. Guests will also have the opportunity to contribute directly to camp scholarships and other Arthritis Foundation programs.

Dinner promises to be an unforgettable feast: chefs from six top Connecticut restaurants will each prepare and present a course, resulting in a lavish meal entirely donated by the chefs and their restaurants. The wines, expertly paired with each course, will be chosen and provided by Frederick Wildman & Sons Importers, a New York City company known for its collection of luxury vintages from around the world.


Contributing chefs include Ryan Jones and Kelleanne Jones of the buzzworthy Mill at 2t in Tariffville), Billy Grant of Restaurant Bricco and Grants in West Hartford and Bricco Trattoria in Glastonbury, Chef Hunter Morton of Max Downtown, Chef Adam Greenberg of Barcelona,

Chef Tyler Anderson of Millwright's Restaurant & Tavern, and Anthony Martino and Timothy S. Fitzgerald of the Riverview in Simsbury, the posh banquet facility where Docs, Dine and Wine will be hosted.

The focus of the evening is, of course, the Arthritis Foundation and the gifted physicians who provide treatment and healing to arthritis patients. The "Docs" honored at the 2012 event hail from Hartford's largest hospitals: Dr. John Mara, Orthopedic Surgeon, and Dr. Thomas Terenzi, Rheumatologist, from Saint Francis Hospital and Medical Center; Dr. Kristan Pierz, Orthopedic Surgeon, of Connecticut Children's Medical Center; and Dr. Andrew Caputo, Orthopedic Surgeon and Dr. Mark Ruderman, Rheumatologist, from Hartford Hospital. It should be noted that the three hospitals are also sponsors of the event, which is an unusual accomplishment in fund-raising circles.

Joining Mr. Hoffman as co-chairs are Larry Kucharski, G.M. of Enterprise Rent-A-Car in Windsor Locks, and James Carley, V.P. and Sales Director of BNY Mellon Wealth Management in West Hartford.

Individual tickets are \$185 per person, all inclusive, which Ms. Seltzer notes is a bargain.

"It's going to be easy to fill that room," says the exuberant Hoffman. The fundraising goal this year is \$250,000, and sponsorship opportunities abound. Says Hoffman, "Let's do it for the kids!" 

For information and updates, please contact Jaime Seltzer at (860)563-1177 or [jseltzer@arthritis.org](mailto:jseltzer@arthritis.org) or visit [arthritis.org/connecticut](http://arthritis.org/connecticut).



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Orthopedic Surgeon  
CT CHILDREN'S MEDICAL  
CENTER



Dr. Andrew E. Caputo  
Orthopedic Surgeon  
HARTFORD HOSPITAL



Dr. Mark Ruderman  
Rheumatologist  
HARTFORD HOSPITAL



Dr. John Mara  
Orthopedic Surgeon  
ST. FRANCIS HOSPITAL  
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Dr. Thomas Terenzi  
Rheumatologist  
ST. FRANCIS HOSPITAL  
and MEDICAL CENTER

# The 14 Sexiest Cars in the Hoffman Auto Group Portfolio

By Ellis Parker

There's something about the relationship between man and machine that goes beyond mere construction materials, mere physics, mere action and reaction. Any vehicle on the market can take you from point A to point B. But for true car lovers, it's not just about getting to a destination—it's about the journey.

This fall, I sought out the 14 sexiest cars in the Hoffman Auto Group portfolio. You know that lineup has to include some real beauties. Sadly, I'm not a realistic candidate for most of these vehicles, as several boast higher horsepower than my beleaguered credit score.

But even a pauper like me knows that mere transportation isn't the only reason to purchase a vehicle. If you're buying a new car, it should be one that "speaks" to you. And I don't mean speaks to you

like KITT in the TV series *Knight Rider*—in the first go-around a modified 1982 Pontiac Trans Am, in the second a 2008-2009 Ford Shelby GT500KR—although several of the Hoffman cars I tested approached KITT levels of coolness.

Indeed, Hoffman Auto has some cars that will stir real passion in you. These chariots will get your heart pumping, your blood racing, your temple throbbing. Most of them are cars you can actually get—although a couple of them are almost as hard to come by as a KITT car.

Of course, sexy means different things to different people. Some of the cars we chose are speed demons, others classy little coupes with plenty of scoot, still others sweet family vehicles that represent an ideal compromise of features, and one is a rugged workhorse that's surprisingly genteel. Each vehicle stands out in one way or another and has plenty of personality.

If not love at first sight, each of the cars at least stirred lust in my heart, with the potential for a torrid affair. Be sure to read our full-length review of the Audi R8, perhaps the sexiest ride of all.



### FORD MUSTANG COBRA SHELBY GT 500

- Performance: 650 HP, 600 pound-feet of torque, 0-60 in 3.6 seconds, top speed 202 mph
- Fuel Costs: 15 MPG city, 24 MPG highway
- Price with Destination Charges: \$54,995
- Body Type: 2-door, 4-passenger coupe
- Personality of: Danica Patrick
- Why Buy: This is a car that plays hard to get. I had to test drive an earlier model. The performance of even this older grabber blue Stang with white racing stripes was just sick. Absolutely do not let your teenage son near one of these. Hide the keys! With its 5.8-liter DOHC supercharged engine, the most powerful production V8 in the world, this cobra spits venom in the face of competitors (many costing twice the price) like the Chevy Camaro ZLI. Remarkably, it's put together on the regular Mustang assembly line, making it their first production car to top 200 mph.



### NISSAN ALTIMA 2.5 SV

- Performance: 182 Horsepower, 0-60 in 8.3 seconds, top speed 115 mph (electronically limited)
- Fuel Costs: 27 MPG city, 31 MPG combined, 38 MPG highway, \$1,700 annual fuel cost
- Price with Destination Charges: \$24,880
- Body Type: 4-door, 5-passenger midsize sedan
- Personality of: Cat Cora or Cat Deeley
- Why Buy: Getting a lot of car for the price is sexy, which could explain why the 2012 was the number two selling car in America last year. With the 2013 redesign, this car has only gotten better. It's still sporty and comfortable but boasts impressive fuel efficiency and more high-tech features. It's class-leading in space, with comfortable rear seating for three passengers and a huge trunk. The 182 HP 4-cylinder engine delivers plenty of power, which the continuously variable transmission applies smoothly, responsively and economically. The interior is quiet, while NASA-inspired "zero gravity" seats minimize driver fatigue. Numerous features like intelligent key, Bluetooth cellphone connectivity and audio streaming are standard.





#### PORSCHE BOXTER S

- Performance: 315 HP, 0-60 in 4.8 seconds, top speed 173 mph
- Fuel Costs: 20 MPG city, 28 MPG highway (estimated)
- Price with Destination Charges: \$61,850
- Body Type: 2-door, 2-passenger, mid-engine sport convertible
- Personality of: Eva Longoria
- Why Buy: When I took out the Porsche Boxter S convertible, I seriously considered not bringing her back. We could be in Canada in about 15 minutes, I figured. With the PDK option, even sooner. Her top came down effortlessly even as we were leaving the show lot. I loved the late summer sun on my face and warm wind in my hair. When we roared up the on-ramp, the Boxter's acceleration and handling left me breathless. Driving purists like to feel the road—in this car, you do. I swooned over her aggressive styling, especially the large air intakes in front of the rear wheels and her cat-eyed taillights. "Just buy it!" a salesman teased, as I returned it. If only...



#### PORSCHE 911 CARRERA CABRIOLET

- Performance: 350 HP, 0-60 in 4.6 seconds, top speed 177 mph
- Fuel Costs: 19 MPG city, 22 MPG combined, 27 MPG highway, \$2,600 annual fuel cost
- Price with Destination Charges: \$94,650
- Body Type: 2-door, 2 + 2 convertible
- Personality of: Eva Mendes
- Why Buy: The iconic sports car, the Porsche 911 practically personifies sexy with its graceful lines and road presence. The top can be raised or stowed in 11 seconds while driving up to 37 mph. With its top down, the chassis remains stiff for great handling. With its top up, the car looks and feels like a coupe and unwanted sounds disappear. The front seats are comfortable, with amenities aplenty, the rear seats for kids, pets or golf clubs. Elegantly understated, the car is a carnivore, transforming in a flash from pussycat into snarling tiger. The state-of-the-art PDK seven-speed dual clutch option will make the car more economical and even faster (0-60 in 4.4 seconds).



#### SCION FR-S

- Performance: 200 Horsepower, 0-60 in 6.2 seconds, top speed 137 mph
- Fuel Costs: 25 MPG city, 29.5 MPG combined, 34 MPG highway
- Price with Destination Charges: \$24,955
- Body Type: 2-door, 2 + 2 sport coupe
- Personality of: Kristen Kreuk
- Why Buy: For pure bang for the buck, this collaboration between Toyota (of which Scion is a subdivision) and Subaru offers an unrivaled combination of sporty looks, passenger amenities, fuel economy and road performance at a modest price. The trunk is surprisingly spacious, the folding rear seats better suited to grocery bags or a pet than live human beings. The bigger challenge, however, is getting one's hands on the FR-S. Hoffman Auto had none available for a test drive. To secure a ride in one, I tracked down a savvy Hoffman Porsche salesman who had snapped up the first FR-S that came down the pipeline. The playful car's agile performance on Glastonbury and Manchester back roads made me envious.

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#### FORD FUSION

- Performance: 175 HP, 175 pound-feet of torque
- Fuel Costs: 22 MPG city, 26 MPG combined, 34 MPG highway
- Price with Destination Charges: \$22,495
- Body Type: 4-door, 5-passenger midsize sedan
- Personality of: Ginnifer Goodwin
- Why Buy: One of the most anticipated redesigns in years, the third generation Fusion is poised to take America's midsize market by storm. I didn't get to drive one, because it hadn't reached the dealership. Reportedly, even the base model is stylish, handles exceptionally well, and boasts a high fun quotient for its class. A choice of four powertrains (including hybrid) and two transmissions allows buyers to upgrade to even better performance and fuel economy, finding the sweet spot between sporty and practical. The Fusion has nice swooping lines and an attractive nose, plentiful front and rear space, and a voluminous trunk. Interior quality and a quiet cabin reveal real commitment to upgrading the passenger experience.



#### LEXUS LFA

- Performance: 552 HP, 354 pound-feet of torque, 0-60 in under 3.7 seconds, top speed 202 mph
- Fuel Costs: 11 MPG city, 16 MPG highway
- Price with Destination Charges: \$375,000
- Body Type: 2-door, 2-passenger supercar
- Personality of: Cameron Diaz
- Why Buy: Haven't driven one, haven't even seen one. So why talk about a car that's spotted less often than Elvis? Because people who want what they want will find a way. Reportedly, they're building just 500 of these supercars for worldwide consumption and then that's it—and there are only a couple left. They have to be ordered by the customer. A couple of years ago, *Car & Driver* compared it with a Ferrari 599 HGTE on Welsh back roads—and gave the nod to the LFA. With an exhaust scream that could break glass, the LFA is the closest you can get to the sound and feel of a Formula 1 car. So what do *you* really want?



#### NISSAN 370Z

- Performance: 332 HP, 0-60 in 4.5 seconds, track speed 175 mph, top speed 155 mph (electronically limited)
- Fuel Costs: 18 MPG city, 23 MPG combined, 26 MPG highway
- Price with Destination Charges: \$33,120
- Body Type: 2-door, 2-passenger sports coupe
- Personality of: Zoe Saldana
- Why Buy: The racy black cherry 370Z I drove was one of my favorite cars. I didn't get to drive the 2013, because Hoffman can't keep it in the showroom. Driving an earlier model, I wondered: why would anyone give up a rocket like this? Silly question: to get the latest one! The 2013 upgrade is subtle and mostly stylistic however, because you don't mess with perfection. Its continuously variable valve timing control system improves performance and fuel efficiency. As for handling, this car locks onto the road like a heat-seeking missile. This car is baaaaad! Don't buy one if you lack self-control. Don't loan it out. And finally, to maximize your pleasure, get it with stick.

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#### FORD F-450 4 X 4 DRW LARIAT DIESEL PICKUP

- Performance: 400 HP, 800 pound-feet of torque
- Price with Destination Charges: \$60,470 with Lariat trim package
- Body Type: 4-door, crew cab
- Personality of: Michelle Rodriguez
- Why Buy: You're gonna laugh. The F-450 comes in a number of configurations. I didn't get to test drive a pickup, but rather a vermilion red dump truck. Sexy, huh? But you know, it was sexy—in a flannel shirt, lunch pail and work boots kind of way. Sexy in a slowly rolling a monster truck over your ex-wife's new boyfriend's BMW kind of way. Built by Ford engineers, this best-in-class pickup is a horse, with a 6.7-liter V8 turbo diesel, 4-wheel drive, traction control, and superior towing and payload numbers. Yet it's hardly roughing it, coming with all of the creature comforts of a luxury SUV.



#### FORD ESCAPE S

- Performance: 168 HP, 170 pound-feet of torque
- Fuel Efficiency: 22 MPG city, 31 MPG highway
- Price with Destination Charges: \$22,470
- Body Type: 4-door, 5-passenger SUV
- Personality of: Evangeline Lilly
- Why Buy: Big boxy SUVs appear to be on the way out and more-car-like crossovers on the way in, so the Ford Escape's major new redesign would seem well-timed. Nevertheless, it replaces a model that had become the fifth best-selling car in America. If no Amazon, the newcomer is at least a bit of a tomboy. This sleek-looking escape artist actually more closely resembles a tall hatchback than a traditional American-style SUV. While seeming surprisingly roomy inside, the car leaves a small footprint outside. Seating for five is comfortable, but don't expect a third-row-seat option. The Escape provides a nimble and pleasurable driving experience. Step up to one of the Ecoboost engines if you want all-wheel drive.



#### AUDI RS5

- Performance: 450 HP, 0-60 in 4.5 seconds, top speed 155 mph (electronically limited)
- Fuel Efficiency: 16 MPG city, 23 MPG highway (estimated)
- Price with Destination Charges: \$69,795
- Body Type: 2-door, 4-passenger coupe
- Personality of: Catherine Zeta-Jones
- Why Buy: I just missed the chance to drive an Audi RS5. Hoffman had one for only a day before it was snapped up, a pretty good reference in itself. Obviously, if you look at the specs, this is another lean mean screamin' machine. This rocket is powered by a 4.2-liter V8 that, according to Stephan Reil of Quattro GmbH, is actually a little more advanced than the 4.2-liter V8 that powers the Audi R8 and based on lessons learned from the R8's optional 5.2-liter V-10. Photos reveal it's a thing of beauty, with gracious yet aggressive styling. Handling is reportedly confidence-inspiring. The Audi RS5 is hard to come by, but clearly worth the effort.

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\*2013 ES 300h EPA-estimated 40/39/40 (city/highway/combined) MPG. Actual mileage will vary.



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## LEXUS ES350

- Performance: 268 HP at 6200 rpm, 0-60 in 7.1 seconds, top speed 130 mph (electronically limited)
- Fuel Costs: 21 MPG city, 24 MPG combined, 31 MPG highway, \$2,200 annual fuel cost
- Price with Destination Charges: \$39,782
- Body Type: 4-door, 5-passenger sedan
- Personality of: Kate Middleton
- Why Buy: This redesigned Lexus entry-level luxury model is already a bit hit on the Hoffman showroom floor. It's slightly longer and lighter and even better looking than its popular predecessor. If you find refinement rewarding and civility sexy, this is the car for you. Headroom and legroom are vastly improved. The car has plenty of get-up-and-go and handles quite well—but you'll hardly feel it. Its cabin is so quiet and comfortable you could slice through traffic like a madman without your aging parents having a clue. Even the base model is very well-appointed. Consider the hybrid, which for only \$2,500 more achieves 40 MPG combined.



## LEXUS ISF

- Performance: 418 HP, 0-60 in 4.6 seconds, top speed 170 mph (electronically limited)
- Fuel Costs: 16 MPG city, 18 MPG combined, 23 MPG highway, \$3,300 annual fuel cost
- Price with Destination Charges: \$62,495
- Body Type: 4-door, 4-passenger luxury sports car
- Personality of: Maggie Q
- Why Buy: This one reminded me of the fast girls Mom warned me to avoid. So of course, I couldn't have been more intrigued. What a combination of good looks, comfort and performance! While the ES 350 tends to insulate you from your external environment, the ISF provides enough road feel so you feel you're an integral part of her performance, a melding of man and machine. Her raw power and speed are matched by her agility and ride quality. When you open her up, she gives a satisfying throaty roar. "I heard you on the road," says a young Latino car buyer. "Is she as fast as she sounds?" "Oh yeah!" I grin.



# Romanced by the Audi R8 4.2 quattro Coupe 2D

By Ellis Parker



The Audi R8 lurking across the river from Hartford...

It's true that I took out 14 (give or take) of the sexiest vehicles in the Hoffman Auto Group portfolio. I'll have to answer for that. Heaven knows, I was romanced by several racy beauties who batted their big dark eyes at me, purred sweet nothings in my ear, showed me a good time, and promised serious commitment. But there was one that meant more to me than the rest. The one I took home with me and put through her paces until we both lost all track of place and time was a phantom black pearl Audi R8 4.2 quattro 2-door coupe that might have been the sweetest little piece of automotive tail assembly I had ever encountered.

I suppose that, at my advanced years, I should be in a long-term relationship with a vehicle closer to my own age. I know it turns more than a few heads when I take these younger cars out. I feel the men looking at me with a mixture of envy and secret approbation, while the ladies cluck their outright disap-

proval and wonder when I'll ever grow up. But how can a man control what he desires?

Only a cynic could say he doesn't believe in love at first sight. I was completely dumbstruck by the Audi R8. The 2013 wasn't out yet, so the car I was driving was a returned 2012 with just 4,700 miles on her. Talk about

cherry! Heck, she'd hardly been around the block. The engine was mounted over the car's haunches right (gasp!) where everyone could see it through a transparent rear panel. Lord, I knew some cars dressed skimpily, but I hadn't seen anything like that since I lost my youthful head over a 1966 silver mink Thunderbird convertible whose top came down at the slightest provocation.

I took a sightseeing Sunday drive with my Audi R8. She loved our giddy ride through the country, posing shamelessly for repeated photos, enjoying the power she had over me. We cruised uninvited up the tree-lined drive to the Wadsworth Mansion in Middletown, where she practically flaunted her wares. She posed again by the Mattabesett Canoe Club, the Arrigoni Bridge in the background as a young skateboarder stared transfixed by her headlights. She carried on in front of the Portland Brownstone Quarry. For a second I feared she had water sports in mind, but she was just teasing me. She primly wheeled away, and on



we continued to the Rocky Hill-Glastonbury Ferry, where she again insisted on being the center of attention. People continued to gawk at Great River Park in East Hartford, where I photographed her in front of the Connecticut River with Hartford in the background.

Once in Hartford, she had to see all of the sights—the Connecticut Science Center, the Hartford Marriott Downtown, the Wadsworth Atheneum, the Soldiers & Sailors Memorial Arch, the Mark Twain House, the Harriet Beecher Stowe House. This sassy chassis wouldn't behave for a second. Not only did she insist on being photographed in front of the Capitol, she actually had the cheekiness to sweep the neon green traffic cone aside and occupy Governor Dannel P. Malloy's parking space for a few remembrance shots. It was easier just to go along with her than to fight her, if I'd even possessed the willpower, but I could tell that if I spent much time with a gal this carefree, this fast and loose, I would only wind up in trouble.

And in fact, we were stopped everywhere we went. We were detained by the State Police, held up by Hartford police and questioned by CT Transit personnel. Each time, I thought I was in trouble but they just wanted to ogle my date. They gave me two thumbs up, paid her endless compliments. They asked questions about her suspension, her handling and her get-up-and-go that, frankly, I thought were rather personal. We were even accosted late at night in the parking lot of the apartment building where I live.

Wherever we went, people leered and asked prying questions. It was almost as if I wasn't there. But you guys know how it is. Even if you date someone way over your head, you play it cool and don't let anyone know that you completely got lucky. Men constantly tried to cut in, wanting to take her for a spin, but of course I stood my ground. Stunning women sidled up to me—as if they could ever come between us. I could feel they were looking at me with different eyes. "Maybe I've underestimated him," they seemed to be thinking.

I also noticed that other drivers changed their behavior around us. Drawn probably by the Audi R8's self-assured styling, sultry growl and engine visible through the rear panel, some strained to keep up with us. Others pulled up



Taking the nation's oldest continuously operating ferry from South Glastonbury to Rocky Hill...

next to us and gaped. It was a little disconcerting at times, but of course we shrugged off all such pretenders effortlessly.

I tried to understand why the Audi R8's previous beau had spurned her. They say that even the most amazing gals experience rejection at one point or another. "He wanted to trade his coupe in for a Spyder," I learned. Men! Sometimes I'm ashamed to be one. Couldn't he see she was as beautiful on the outside as she was on the inside? Well, his loss—my gain.

Based on a *U.S. News & World Report* article, most critics apparently agree: "The 2012 Audi R8 ranks 1 out of 5 Super Luxury Sports Cars. This ranking is based on our analysis of 51 published reviews and test drives of the Audi R8, and our analysis of reliability and safety data. Reviewers love the 2012 Audi R8 for its impressive performance and aggressive styling, but unlike some other exotic sports cars, the R8 is also comfortable."

I'm sure you're trying to visualize her. You're wondering about her height, her weight, her measurements, even her coloration. I don't want to brag, but if I run down her traits, you'll see what a fortunate fellow I was! So let me give you *this* reviewer's take on the Audi R8.

Her exterior appearance is class personified. The Audi R8's features are somewhat aquiline, her full LED headlights reminiscent of the piercing eyes of a hawk or eagle. Appropriately, the world's fastest animal is the peregrine falcon, which can plummet to earth at speeds approaching 200 mph. The

Audi R8 is somewhere in the same range. Distinctive styling features include a wide body, side scoops, air inlets and louvers, quad exhaust pipes, 19-inch aluminum alloy wheels, and retractable spoiler that emerges at freeway speeds. But the crowning jewel is the mid-mounted engine displayed in the back window beneath a transparent panel in a carbon fiber Sigma engine bar with LED engine compartment illumination.

As with all Audis, the R8's interior is meticulously crafted with top-of-the-line materials. The comfort level far exceeds that of most cars that can approach its road capabilities. Seats, climate control, sound system, connectivity—all are what you would expect. But there's a sheer beauty to the details, like the leather and faux suede upholstery, illuminated doorsill inserts, aluminum footrest and pedals, futuristic driver door handle and arm rest. I could list all of the Audi R8's amenities, but with a vehicle costing well into the six figures, you have to know it won't be lacking. Visit [audiusa.com](http://audiusa.com) for more information.

Because quattro GmbH and Automobili Lamborghini are wholly owned subsidiaries of Audi AG, the Audi R8 benefits from an ideal combination of Italian racing design and German precision engineering.

The Audi R8 racecar was one of the most successful ever, winning the 24 Hours of Le Mans in five of the seven years it competed from 1999-2006. The namesake Audi R8 road-going sports car shares a platform and other components with the legendary Lamborghini Gallardo and features the





The Audi R8 visits the Harriet Beecher Stowe mansion in Hartford...

trademark quattro permanent all-wheel drive system. Six-time 24 Hours of Le Mans winner Jacky Ickx reportedly called the Audi R8 “the best handling road car today.” *Edmunds* extolled its “posterous power, quick reflexes and heroic grip.”

Who am I to disagree? The Audi R8 transforms from lamb to Lamborghini in the blink of an eye. The 4.2 liter V-8 supplies 430 HP and 317 pound-feet of torque that propels it from zero to sixty in a heart-stopping 4.4 seconds and boasts a top track speed of 187 mph. The speedometer tops off at 220—just in case. As if this gal weren’t racy enough, she has a big sister with a 5.2 liter V-10 that does zero to sixty in a just sick 3.7 seconds. Fuel economy? As they used to say about price, if you have to ask, you can’t afford it, but expect around 11 city and 20 highway if you play nice.

Car reviewers don’t play nice. Punching it from a complete stop half way up a steep hill, it felt as if we were pointed at the stars and had enough power to achieve orbit. My usually spirited wife, who used to regale me with tales of riding on the back of former boyfriends’ motorcycles, informed me she was no longer interested in accompanying me on the performance part of my road tests. She wobbled after she got out.

The Audi R8’s handling is helped by its low stance, mid-mounted engine, aluminum double-wishbone front and rear suspension, and choice of normal (for maximum comfort) or sport mode (for better handling). Audi magnetic ride constantly adapts to the chang-

ing situation, making you want to accelerate, not brake, going into turns, the car clinging to the asphalt as effectively as all of those upside-down Aussies going walkabout in the bush. There’s unusually good outward visibility for a car in this class. The cockpit is tilted toward the driver so that his or her performance matches the car’s. The six-speed manual transmission is standard and recommended. I relished the sound, feel and assurance of the gated metal shifter.

My wife may no longer volunteer for performance tests, but she loved the Audi R8 as about-town transportation. (The hard ride of some of the other models I dallied with left one needing a chiropractor afterwards.) She wanted to be seen in it, even photographed draped over it. I think she and the Audi R8 might have had a secret “thing” going on, too. From the looks of it, she and the Audi R8 will be BFFFs (best Facebook friends forever). As if a little competition could be a good thing, my wife even seemed to see me a little differently after my dalliance with the Audi R8.

My quibbles about the Audi R8 are few. Even the best car design involves compromises. If you like your seat close to the wheel for better handling, as I do, it takes a little more effort to exit the car (although the flat-bottomed steering wheel helps your legs clear easily). The electronics interface can initially take some getting used to. Putting the ashtray/charger on the rear center console between the front seats seems dubious, but no one in his or her right mind will allow a cigarette anywhere

near the interior. The gated metal shifter should be lit slightly, so that at night when you forget what gear you’re in (easy to do in a car that can comfortably cruise in the fourth of its sixth gears), you can select the appropriate action. It’s not a trip car—the forward trunk is small and behind the seats there’s space for not much more than a couple of golf bags.

All that being said, I suspect I may never drive a car that balances performance and everyday comfort better. The more time I spent with her, the more head over heels in love with her I became. But in the end I forced myself to let her go. “You were just a prolonged test drive,” I informed her. “A casual fling. I never had any intention of a permanent relationship. And honestly, I’m not worthy. It’s me, not you.”

“You heel!” she exclaimed, but just as soon as I was out of sight I was forgotten. A supercar like this knows she can just bat her LED headlights at the next passing guy. I know I’ll never forget *her*—or the days I dated so far above my station in life. **H**

#### AUDI R8 4.2 QUATTRO COUPE

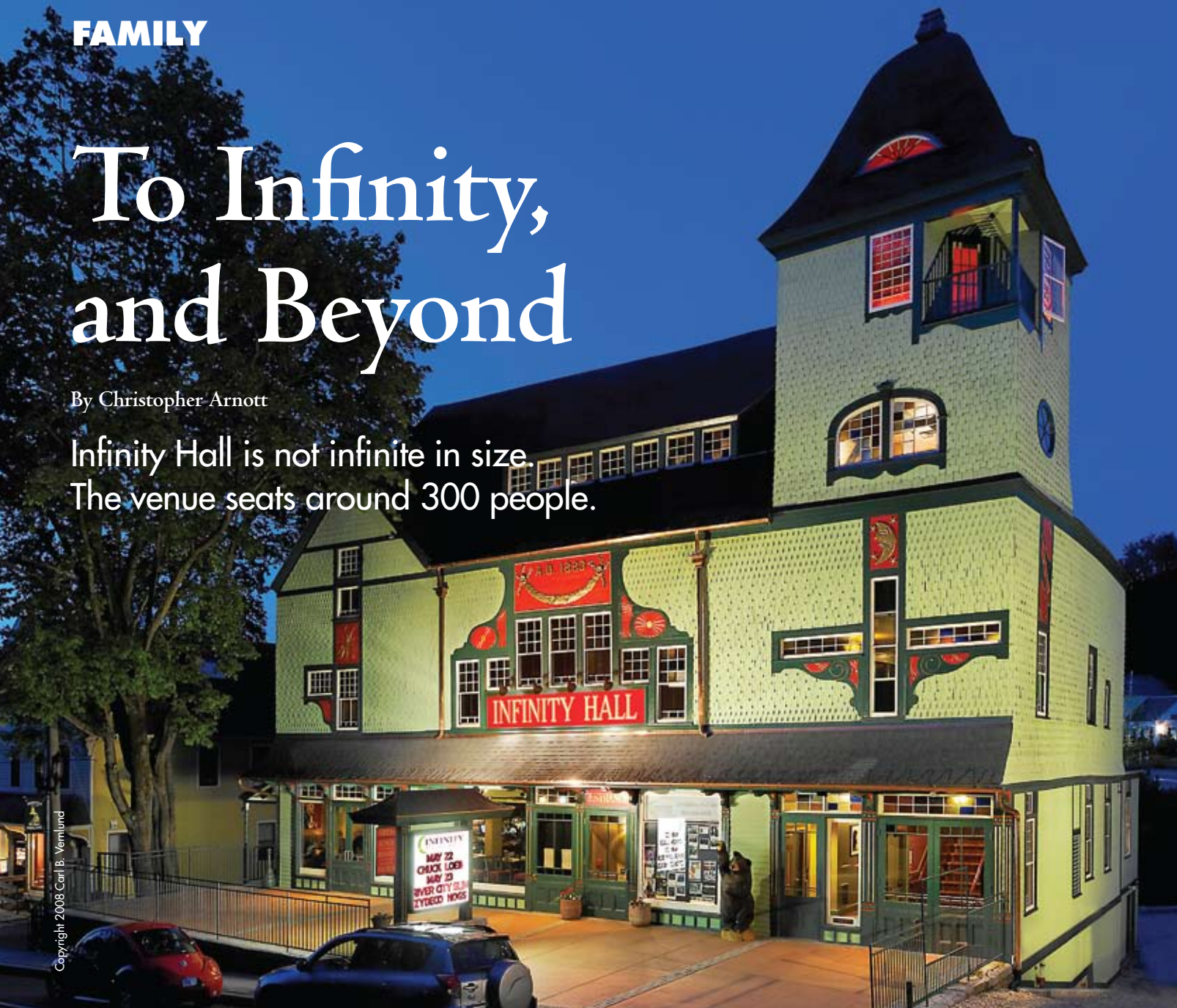
- Performance: 430 HP, 0-60 in 4.4 seconds, top speed 187 mph
- Fuel Efficiency: 11 MPG city, 20 MPG highway
- Price with Destination Charges: \$118,450
- Body Type: Mid-engine 2-seat supercar
- Personality of: Angelina Jolie
- Why Buy: German precision engineering provides for head-turning looks and stunning performance without sacrificing everyday comfort. With just small front and behind-seats storage, this may not be a trip car but it’s a terrific round-town ride. The cabin interior is meticulously crafted from top-of-the-line materials and offers plenty of amenities. The car’s wide stance and distinctive styling will draw plenty of initial attention, but the crowning jewel is the visible V8 engine mounted in the rear window beneath a transparent panel. Her big sister, the 5.2 with V10 engine may outperform her slightly, but this is the one to buy. This is the one I took home!



# To Infinity, and Beyond

By Christopher Arnott

Infinity Hall is not infinite in size.  
The venue seats around 300 people.



Copyright 2008 Carl B. Vennard

Infinity Hall is tucked away in the breathtakingly quaint woodsy town of Norfolk, Connecticut. A week of successful shows at the venue can bring as many people to town as live there year round.

"It is an extremely intimate place," says its founder Dan Hincks. "It's an acoustically pristine space to see the best of music."

Now in its fifth year, Infinity Music Hall has a well-rounded schedule of roughly 250 shows a year. You can see rising stars, older artists in the midst of comebacks, tribute acts and reliable party bands. You'll find events of local, regional and national interest. In early September, the venue hosted Javier Colón, who was born in Stratford, currently lives in West Hartford and is internationally known as the big winner on the first season of *The Voice*. Long-lived Connecticut-based swing band Eight to the Bar has been booked for a Halloween party on Saturday, Oct. 27.

In some cases, the Infinity Music Hall offers audiences a chance to see artists in a luxurious theater environment, instead of the clubs or

outdoor stages those same acts might otherwise play in Connecticut. Cheryl Wheeler, who's playing the Music Hall Oct. 18, headlined the outdoor Connecticut Folk Festival in September. Grayson Hugh, the Connecticut-born solo artist who had radio hits in the 1980s and has recently emerged from seclusion, played the Meriden Daffodil Festival in May; he's at Infinity Nov. 21 with his band The Moon Hawks.

The schedule ranges from tribute bands (Fleetwood Mac pretenders Tusk and Pink Floyd tribute The Machine both play in December, while March brings both The Cast of Beatlemania and Abba impersonators Arrival), to guitar legends (Johnny Winter on Jan. 4, Roy Clark on Feb. 24).

There are familiar faces from the 1960s (B.J. Thomas, Dec. 14), the '70s (The Tubes on Nov. 3, Little River Band on Jan. 20), the '80s (The Smithereens, Dec. 9), the '90s (Toad the Wet Sprocket, Oct. 14), the '00s (Fountains of Wayne, Nov. 10) and beyond (a "New England's Rising



Stars” showcase of Adam Ezra Group, The Alternate Routes and Jason Spooner on Dec. 16). There’s no shortage of reliable R&B, blues/rock or jam bands, from The Blues Project (Nov. 8) and Max Creek (Nov. 24) to Commander Cody (Nov. 30), The Grand Slambovians (Jan. 12) and Roomful of Blues (March 8), from timeless talents such as the Kingston Trio (doing afternoon and evening shows on Oct. 28), David Bromberg (Nov. 2), Dave Mason (Nov. 29) and—in the same wild week of mid-October—Taj Mahal (Oct. 7), John Hiatt (Oct. 10), Jorma Kaukonen (Oct. 11) and Delbert McClinton (Oct. 12).

Concertgoers have flocked to Infinity from all over, and some have flown in from as far away as Texas, even Europe, for certain shows. “It’s amazing how far people have traveled,” Hincks marvels, “though most are within an hour’s radius of the venue.”

That doesn’t count the millions who have Infinity Hall shows brought to them through their TV screens, which are produced locally and syndicated to public television stations nationwide. “We had the idea of doing broadcasting right from the start,” Hincks explains. “It’s just such a beautiful place.” When Jerry Franklin, president of *CPTV*, came to see a show at the hall, he immediately saw the potential as well.

The building has been a performing arts center for well over half of its 130-year history—first as the Norfolk Opera House (when “opera houses” housed a variety of entertainments, from touring classical vocalists to vaudeville revues). The stage space was originally augmented by a barber shop and a bar. For the second half of the 20th century, there was no performance space, just a restaurant and a food market. From 1998-2007, it became a theater again—the Greenwoods Theater, which when Hincks bought the building at auction in 2007, he proposed turning into a year-round concert venue. He had already started a company, Infinity Music, and had ideas. “But I was still



Photo by Bill Keane

the right building but the right community. “It’s an incredible town,” Hincks says. “They welcomed us with open arms.”

Infinity Music Hall opened on October 17, 2008. The bistro followed on May 1, 2009. While the hall was based around the building’s original stage and auditorium areas—“We just had to make ‘great’ even better,” Hincks says—“the bistro had to be built from scratch.”

The executive chef since the beginning has been Dan Fortin, the former executive chef of the Goodwin Hotel in Hartford who has also worked at the Back Porch in Old Saybrook and Hartford’s Trumbull

*The adjacent Infinity Bistro is highly regarded for its small plates, seasonal specialties and attention to detail.*

*“No order is too small,” its take-out menu attests. That may not suggest the infinite, but it does bring to mind something even better, that rhymes with it.*

*Intimate.*



looking for a venue where I could have a restaurant and a music hall.” He was confident he could find such a place in Connecticut. Hincks is from Farmington, where, on top of his Infinity duties, he still serves as CEO of Data Management Inc., a business his father started in 1961.

“I had been touring the country for a whole year, finding out what worked best,” Hincks says, noting that he took inspiration from such places as the Ram’s Head in Annapolis, Maryland.

Then he visited Norfolk, where he felt that not only had he found

Kitchen. Fortin, who gained some of his culinary training in the Caribbean, is renowned for his creative, multi-cultural cooking style. The regions represented on the Bistro menu—from Caribbean to Creole, Asian to American—are as varied as the genres which grace the Infinity Music Hall stage.

When asked for a personal recommendation from the menu, Hincks laughs. “I eat almost the entire menu. We’re known for our fish. There’s a great selection of small plates. The lobster hushpuppies are very popular. There are great vegetarian dishes. We serve all the needs.”

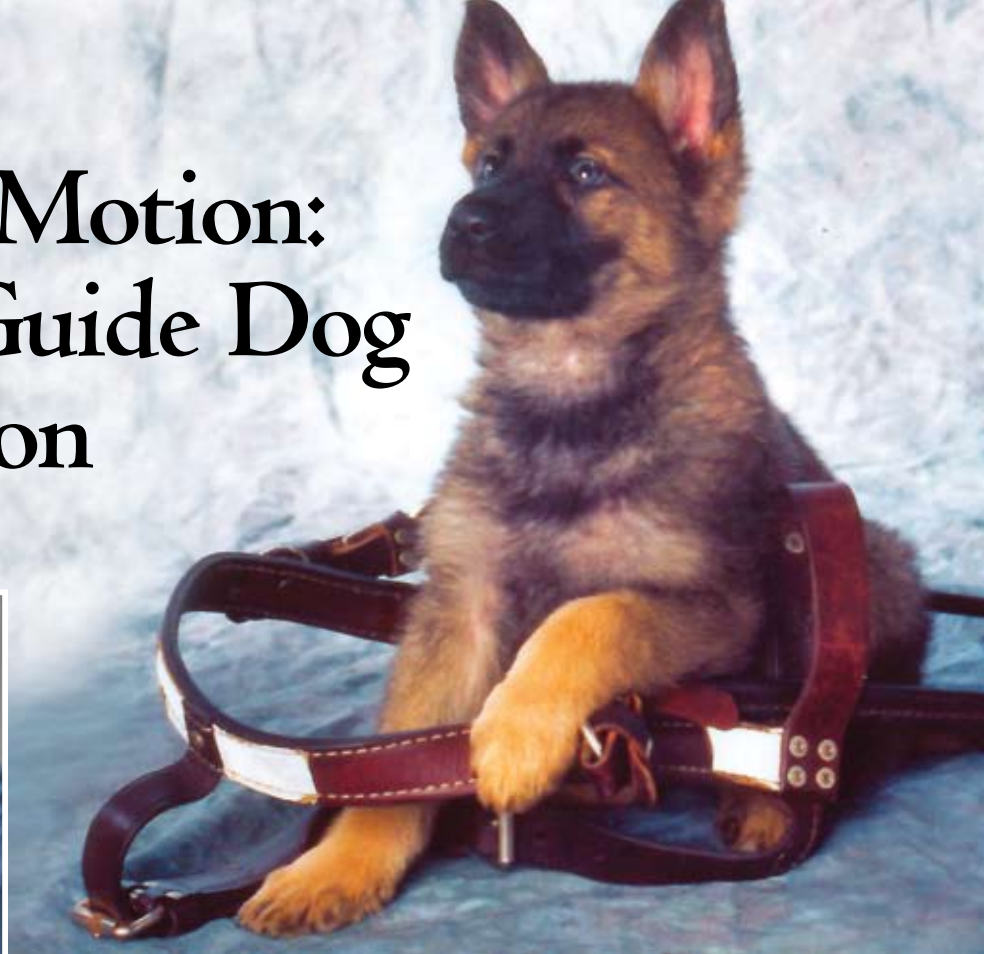
“It has a high quality restaurant and high quality music. Intimate concerts and creative cuisine. It’s a complete night out, but some people do come just to for the shows, or just for dinner.

The Infinity formula of intimacy, taste and quality control is so strong it should be able to work anywhere. And so it shall.

After months of rumors swirling around the development plans for the new Front Street District, it was announced in late September that a new, second Infinity Hall will be built in Hartford. The new hall, expected to have 500 seats (plus 100 seats in the bistro) will be larger than the Infinity in Norfolk. Scheduled to be completed by the end of 2013, the second Infinity will complement other tourist-friendly and economy-boosting aspects of the ongoing Adriaen’s Landing project, such as the Connecticut Science Center and the Connecticut Convention Center. **H**

# Trust In Motion: Fidelco Guide Dog Foundation

By Sharon Burke



January 3, 2010, was a day like all days in the hot, jagged mountains of Kandahar, Afghanistan. Senior Airman (SrA) Michael Malarsie and his Tactical Air Control Party team partner, SrA Bradley Smith,

inspected their equipment and began a foot patrol with an Army platoon. What they didn't know was that in a milli-second, their lives would be changed forever.

As Michael's father, Jim, says, "The universe suddenly shifted." An improvised explosive device (IED) detonated and killed four team members. The blast's force blew Michael off the bridge and into the water below. Despite his body armor, he was severely wounded and blinded. Michael's dream of a military career and his forward motion in life were halted—literally and figuratively. It was the beginning of an extraordinary journey.

Fast forward exactly one year later to January 3, 2011. Michael is partnered with Fidelco Guide Dog "Xxon" and his life shifts out of neutral and into drive, returning to active duty in the Air Force.

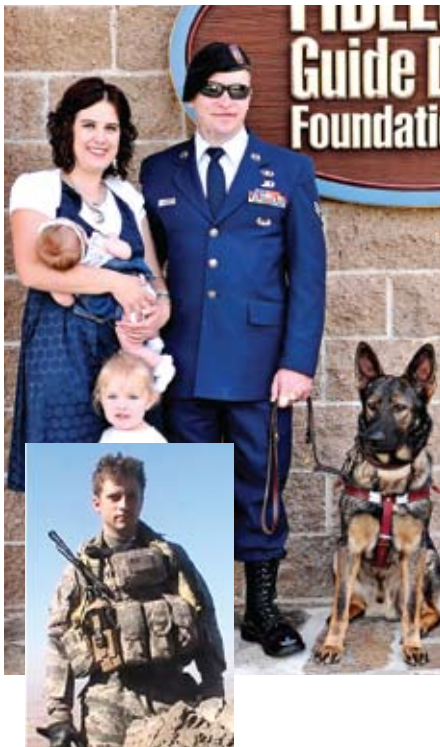
Eliot D. Russman, Fidelco's CEO and Executive Director, understands the life-changing power of Fidelco Guide Dogs. And he sees an increasing demand for the services of the 50-year-old nonprofit foundation that he's led since October 2009. "Every seven minutes, someone in America becomes blind or visually impaired, and many will need a guide dog. Our clients want independence and self-sufficiency in a world that presumes the ability of everyone to see. And they trust Fidelco. We teach our clients about the value of partnerships and to trust their guide dog. This partnership is trust in motion."

At an age when most teenage girls are preparing for their high school prom or getting ready to begin college, Vicky Nolan was diagnosed with a progressive and degenerative eye disease. She lost most of her sight after the birth of her two children some years later. Vicky rarely left the house and even a small task, like going to the mailbox, became daunting.

As Vicky recalls, "Training with my Fidelco Guide Dog 'Vegas' taught me to conquer some of my biggest fears." Never before an athlete, Vicky discovered recreational rowing as an emotional and physical outlet. Vicky's rowing hobby blossomed and she is very much in motion, having just competed in the 2012 London Paralympic Games.

Founded and headquartered in Bloomfield, CT, the Fidelco Guide Dog Foundation is an internationally acclaimed organization with unique expertise and a life-changing mission. As Russman explains, "Fidelco has broad reach and impact, and it exists in a state of perpetual motion, with no days off. We're like a very large family with over 1,000 lives attached to Fidelco every day, including clients, working guide dogs, volunteers, staff, guide dogs in-training and, joyfully, 80 new puppies and future guide dogs on the ground so far this year."

Eighty-three-year-old former business executive Bill Podolny suffers from glaucoma and is legally







blind. For over a decade, Bill and his Fidelco Guide Dog “Unique” have experienced the golden years of retirement safely and happily together, with Unique in her traditional leather guide dog harness.

During the summer of 2009, violent thunderstorms ripped through central Connecticut. While Bill slept, lightning struck the roof of his house and traveled down the line leading to a 500-gallon propane tank. Bill’s home immediately erupted in flames. In a race against time, Unique’s survival instincts took over. She grasped Bill’s wrist with her mouth and led him to safety outside. No guide dog harness was required. Unique was awarded the Animal Rescue Hero’s Award by the American Red Cross Connecticut Chapter.

Fidelco has placed over 1,300 German Shepherd Guide Dogs with clients throughout North America in 41 states and 5 Canadian provinces—with over 300 placements in Connecticut. Michael and Xxon, Vicky and Vegas, and Bill and Unique are just three poignant examples of Fidelco’s mission to provide the highest quality Guide Dogs available anywhere in the world.

It takes Fidelco two years and \$45,000 to produce each guide dog—and they are given to clients at no cost. On average, a Fidelco German Shepherd Guide Dog will work for 10 years at keeping its human partner safe. As Russman explains it, “The world around us is not accommodating to the blind. New obstacles literally rise up under their feet every day. We’re grateful that our donors and financial supporters—individuals and organizations—recognize that the life-changing value of a

Fidelco Guide Dog far exceeds the cost.”

It also takes a team effort of dedicated staff and passionate volunteers to deliver Fidelco’s mission. There are no days off from being blind, so there are no days off for Fidelco. This commitment ensures that no client is ever left in the dark.

Fidelco’s staff is small—only 44 full-time and part-time employees including an on-staff veterinarian. Central to the successful delivery of Fidelco’s mission are its more than 300 volunteers.

Fidelco staff and volunteers work hand in hand, beginning when the puppies are just three days old. The puppies are moved into the Volunteer Puppy Raisers’ homes when they turn eight weeks old. These dedicated volunteers attend socialization and train-



ing classes at Fidelco and expose the young pups to numerous situations until they are 18 months old. Formal guide dog training is a six-month process conducted by Fidelco’s training staff. A Fidelco Guide Dog is certified for service when it completes three walks in the real world with its trainer blindfolded. All Fidelco Guide Dogs are about two years old when placed with their partner in their home environment—a process pioneered by Fidelco known as “In-Community Placement.”


As a nonprofit, Fidelco subsists solely on the donations and financial support of

individuals and organizations that believe in its mission and want to help Share the Vision®. Fidelco does not receive any government financial support, even for its military veterans guide dog program. It does, however, raise funds through special events, including its annual fundraising dog walk, its new Ride for Independence motorcycle fundraising ride, and its “Dog Days of Summer” kids program where children learn about blindness, people with disabilities and responsible animal care. The program has been sold out for the past three years.

As Russman explains, “Fidelco is a medium size business. Our budget is \$4.5 million. Eighty cents of every donor dollar supports core program services and mission delivery. We’re always in motion. Our current fleet of 22 vehicles has over 2.5 million miles from training and delivering guide dogs to clients—that’s the same as driving cross country 833 times or making five round-trips to the moon. Our volunteers provide \$20+ million dollars of hands-on services every year. We are always working to generate revenue and attract supporters. We want people to bring their passions to Fidelco to help us help our clients. No money—no mission. No volunteers—no victories.”

Mother Nature and medical science have been very good to Fidelco this year—with more than 80 new puppies in the program and more on the way. While most will become guide dogs, others are channeled to different working careers. According to Russman, “Fidelco has provided hundreds of its higher energy German Shepherd Dogs to law enforcement, search and rescue, and missing child recovery organizations to help protect and keep our fellow citizens safe. We’re very proud that Fidelco’s “Logan,” a Connecticut State Police K9, was credited with one of the very few survivor rescues at Ground Zero on 9/11.”

Fidelco values all of its relationships with clients, donors and volunteers. According to Russman, “The trust placed in Fidelco by so many is immeasurable. Trust is the glue that holds our organization together and enables Fidelco to deliver its mission. As Helen Keller said, ‘Alone we can do so little, together we can do so much.’”

For more information about Fidelco, or to donate or volunteer, please visit [www.fidelco.org](http://www.fidelco.org). 

# Events Calendar

Greater Hartford hosts a variety of special events throughout the year—from street festivals and art shows to major concerts and sporting events. Here is a sample of events that may be of interest to you.



**October 15 - December 9. "Pixelated: The Art of Digital Illustration."** The exhibition opens a window into the world of the modern illustrator and the tools and techniques that have transformed the face of illustration in the 21st century. The roster of featured artists spans generations from the most seasoned illustrators with over three decades of experience to some of the youngest and newest names in the field. Among them is Melinda Beck, who has not only produced illustrations for such noteworthy publications as *The New York Times*, *Rolling Stone* and *GQ*, but also created Emmy-nominated animation for Nickelodeon. Tuesday, Wednesday, Friday, 11am-5pm; Thursday, 11am-8pm; Saturday, 10am-5pm; Sunday, noon-5pm. Free with museum admission. *The New Britain Museum of American Art*, 56 Lexington Street, New Britain; 860-229-0257; [www.nbmaa.org](http://www.nbmaa.org).

**October 18-27. "Graveyard Shift Ghost Tours @ The Mark Twain House."** Reports of ghostly apparitions, mysterious bangs, cigar smoke and other unexplained phenomena, featured on *Syfy's* *Ghost Hunters*, have led us to reprise these popular tours. Hear these creepy tales—and learn about Mark Twain's own interest in the supernatural. Spiritualism and ghostly tales were a big part of the Gilded Age, an age of uncertainty, rampant materialism and credulity much like ours. Reserve early to get a spot on these limited and popular tours—they're routinely sold out in advance. Reservations required. Thursday, Friday and Saturday, 6pm-9pm (hourly). Adults \$20; children (10-16) \$13. *The Mark Twain House & Museum*, 351 Farmington Avenue, Hartford; 860-280-3130; [www.marktwainhouse.org](http://www.marktwainhouse.org).



**October 20-21. "Gem & Mineral Show."** Fun for the whole family. Lots of gems & jewelry, mineral specimens and crystals for sale and on exhibit. Hands-on educational exhibits; Saturday lecture on Connecticut geology at 2:00; complimentary raffle ticket for Grand Door Prize with paid admission; lots of free children's games and activities; food & refreshments available; free parking. Great entertainment for kids 5 and up. Saturday, 9:30am-5pm; Sunday, 10am-4pm. Tickets: Adults, \$5; seniors, \$4; kids under age 12 and Scouts, free. *Beals Community Center*, 240 Stafford Avenue, Bristol; 860-490-4370; [www.bristolgem.org](http://www.bristolgem.org).

## October 20-28. "The Connecticut Renaissance Faire."

This year has even more events than ever. From the Highland Games, to coronation of the Pirate King, it's just going to be non-stop Medieval fun. There will be great shopping opportunities, and great shows daily. The Lost Boys will bring their high energy music to the stage, as well as Comedia Mania, and the Wonderfool. Faire food such as bread bowl stews, steak on a stick, and monster turkey legs are available as well as traditional hamburgers. Saturday-Sunday, 11am-6pm. Adults \$16; children (7-15) \$10. *Lions Fairgrounds*, 347 Gilead Street, Hebron; 860-478-5954; [www.ctfaire.com](http://www.ctfaire.com).

## November 2-4. "2012 Connecticut International Auto Show."

Connecticut International Auto Show is the premier showcase of the newest model year import and domestic vehicles—cars, vans, crossovers, hybrids, light trucks and sport utilities. Factory and dealer representatives from the car lines are on hand to answer your questions in a no-pressure environment at the Show. With the car lines all under one roof, it's easy to compare prices and features, saving both time and money. Great entertainment for serious shoppers, car buffs and the entire family! Friday-Saturday, 11am-9pm; Sunday, 11am-5pm. Tickets: Adults, \$10; children (6-12), \$5. *Connecticut Convention Center*, 100 Columbus Boulevard, Hartford; 800-251-1563; [www.connautoshow.com](http://www.connautoshow.com).

## November 8-11. "Hartford Symphony Orchestra Masterworks Series: Appalachian Spring."

*Appalachian Spring* has endured as one of America's most beloved orchestral suites, with its memorable conclusion based on the Shaker hymn, "Simple Gifts." Carolyn Kuan conducts the beautiful original orchestration, along with Dvorak's Symphony No. 8, drawn from Bohemian folk music, and Michael Daugherty's "Gee's Bend," which takes its bluesy inspiration from the spirituals, quilts and quilters of Gee's Bend, Alabama. Thursday, 7:30pm; Friday and Saturday, 8pm; Sunday, 3pm. Call for ticket information. *Belding Theater, The Bushnell Center for the Performing Arts*, 166 Capitol Avenue, Hartford; 860-244-2999; [www.hartfordsymphony.org](http://www.hartfordsymphony.org).



## November 8 - December 2. "The Great American Mousical."

Below the bright lights of Broadway, in the depths of the historic Sovereign Theatre, a troupe of musical-making mice rehearse a new show. When the theatre is threatened by demolition and their diva Adelaide disappears, it will take all paws on deck to fulfill the time-honored tradition: the show must go on! Filled with singing, dancing, and show biz lore, *The Great American Mousical* is a tribute to life in the theatre that celebrates the two most glorious words in the English language: musical comedy. Wednesday, 2pm & 7:30pm; Thursday, 7:30pm; Friday, 8pm; Saturday, 3pm & 8pm; Sunday, 2pm & 6:30pm. \$43. *The Norma Terris Theatre*, 33 North Main Street, Chester; 860-873-8668; [www.goodspeed.org](http://www.goodspeed.org).

**November 9-17. "Land of the Dead."** William Shakespeare's *Land of the Dead*: A True Account of the

Zombie Plague of 1599 by John Heimbuch, directed by Hannah Simms. In London, 1599, Shakespeare's Henry V opens the Globe Playhouse, but while the actors strut and fret, an excess of bile plagues the populace outside. After the opening of his newest play, the company's costumer is bitten by an afflicted madman, and the Queen and her men arrive seeking safety, as life in the playhouse takes a turn for the worse. As the affliction spreads throughout London, the Globe is placed in quarantine and the survivors within must fight for their lives. Can they escape? Is there a cure? Is artistic integrity ever worth dying for? Thursday-Saturday, 7:30pm. \$15, \$8. *Oddfellow's Playhouse Youth Theater*, 128 Washington Street, Middletown; 860-347-6143; [www.oddfellows.org/onstage.php](http://www.oddfellows.org/onstage.php).

## November 16. "Beach Party 2012."

Featuring the Surf City Allstars celebrating 50 years of The Beach Boys' music with Richie Cannata, saxophonist from the Billy Joel Band, and the Polynesian dancers of Kahana Hula. Hors d'oeuvre and open bar, followed by a variety of dinner choices, dessert stations, dancing, and silent auction. All event proceeds go toward important FAVARH programs & services for people with intellectual and developmental disabilities. \$125; Table of 12, \$1320; Sponsorships, \$1500 and up. *The Riverview*, 10 Winslow Place, Simsbury; 860-693-6662 x116; [www.favarh.org](http://www.favarh.org).

## November 23 - December 29. "A Christmas Carol."

Hartford Stage brings the magic of Dickens' heart-warming classic to life in this Connecticut holiday tradition! The tale of Ebenezer Scrooge, the heartless miser who discovers the true meaning of the holiday season after a Christmas Eve haunting, features all of the beloved Charles Dickens' characters: Tiny Tim, Bob Cratchit and the Spirits of Christmas Past, Present, and Future. Ghosts take flight and soar across the stage, carols are sung and snow falls capturing the spirit of a Victorian Christmas forever warming the hearts of adults and children alike. Friday-Sunday, with several weekday and matinee performances (call theater). \$26.50-\$83.50. *Hartford Stage*, 50 Church Street, Hartford; 860-527-5151; [www.hartfordstage.org](http://www.hartfordstage.org).

**November 23 - December 30. "Winterfest."** Join hundreds of others and start a family tradition, coming for a ride during the holiday season. Whether you ride a closed car or are brave enough to try the open "electric sleigh" we promise you a good time. Join your motorists in singing traditional Christmas carols as the trolley makes its way through the "Tunnel of Lights" and you admire the hundreds of lights overhead. Returning to the Visitor Center, it's always a race to get into the warmth and enjoy a nice steaming cup of hot cocoa as you listen to the entertainment and admire all the model trains and displays. Friday-Sunday, 5pm-9pm. Adults \$10, seniors \$8, children (2-12) \$6. *Connecticut Trolley Museum*, 58 North Road, East Windsor; 860-627-6540; [www.ct-trolley.org](http://www.ct-trolley.org).

## December 20. "Trans-Siberian Orchestra - The Lost Christmas Eve."

A modern classic that can stand side-by-side with a Dickens tale, "The Lost Christmas Eve" is the newest TSO holiday tradition, featuring a diverse soundtrack fusing elements of rock, classical, folk, Broadway, and R&B while taking you on a journey into the "Capra-esque" world of TSO creator/producer, Paul O'Neill. Encompassing a rundown hotel, an old toy store, a blues bar, a Gothic cathedral, and their respective inhabitants all intertwined during a single enchanted Christmas Eve in New York City, this year's show is sure to start any TSO fan's holiday season off right. Thursday, 7:30pm. \$71, \$61, \$51, \$41 & \$33. *XL Center*, One Civic Center Plaza, Hartford; 860-249-6333; [www.xlcenter.com](http://www.xlcenter.com).



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