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IN THIS ISSUE

THE COVER STORY

6 Why we love diners

ENTERTAINMENT

12 **Athena Lazo** What it Takes to be a Hero

14 UP AND COMERS: **Tinnitus ~ awesome dudes, super-heavy band**

15 ON CD: **Black Sabbath ~ 13** **Girls' Generation ~ Girl's Generation** **The Welch Boys ~ Bring Back the Fight**

17 GIRLS GOT GAME: **Deadpool: Let the hilarity ensue!**

LIFESTYLE

18 Camaraderie all the buzz at barbershops

19 **Cool Careers:** THE LIFE OF A WINE CONSULTANT

20 **PulseTech:** Avoid sneaky vacation costs with the latest technology

21 Home basics are not so basic with INSTYLE MODERN

22 CLUB, PUB & BAR LISTINGS

24 PULSE SHOTS

28 Travel finds they'll envy you for

DINING & ENTERTAINING

30 *Eat smart while eating out*

31 HOT AND NOW

33 *Worcester Restaurant Week is full of flavor*

39 Bentley Pub brings the Pic back to its roots

40 **PulseBrew:** **GO FOR BOLD FLAVORS**

41 Fresh, local food ~ it's out there

42 **Beers For Good**

STYLE & BEAUTY

43 Get a personal stylist before your next date

44 THE STYLE LIST: Get creative with homemade and recycled fashion

44 For great skin and hair, look no further

45 *Soothe post-summer skin*

45 Get salon nails at home ~ forever and ever

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SKIN: Get a hack-free shave

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COVER STORY

Why we love Diners

By Tine Roycroft





iners
serve up a
delicious
helping of
nostalgia when you head in for
an early morning breakfast or
a late-night snack. There's the
soft glow from the neon lights,
the signs from decades past
that advertise Coca-Cola or
Moxie, the counters and stools
that have seen generations
come and go.

But these classic eateries should not be categorized as mere blasts from the past. More popular than ever, diners ~ which originated in 1872 as “night lunch wagons”~ are still making meals for people of all ages and from all walks of life.

Still, we've said goodbye to the bobby socks, poodle skirts and leather jackets of the early diner days. What keeps America going back to its favorite greasy spoons?

Richard Gutman, curator of The Culinary Arts Museum at Johnson and Wales University in Providence, R.I., has spent most of his adult life visiting diners and has some excellent hunches as to why these restaurants are still all the rage, especially around Worcester.

“Worcester had a company (Worcester Lunch Car Company) that for 55 years built a lot of diners,” Gutman said. “These buildings were then rolled out to a site, ready to be stocked with food and ready to start cooking. They each have a feel of their own and personalities of their own. Some diners don't even have a sign! They announce themselves by the way they look.”

One of the diners created by the company was the Miss Worcester Diner, located on Southbridge Street in Worcester (of course), which was first used as a dining car showroom model. At the helm of this small establishment with a big heart is owner Kim Kniskern.

“People come in and ask me if the diner was actually once a train car because of the way it looks,” Kniskern laughed. “It's been here since 1948. I've always been a local waitress and bartender, and I always loved diners growing up, and then, my husband and I just decided to invest in the dining car. It had been vacant for about three years. I'm going on nine years of owning it.”

Miss Worcester was featured on The Learning Channel's *Best Food Ever* show and was awarded the title of Best Diner out of hundreds of cozy diners throughout the nation.

The Boulevard Diner is another example of the fine work that came out of the Worcester Lunch Car Company. Since 1936, the restaurant's patrons have





received excellent food around the clock. Owner Jimmy George knows what customers want, as he comes from a long line of diner car greatness.

"I was drafted in at a young age," George joked about the business that has been in his family for decades. "I had no choice! I started in 1974, at about 13. (The diner) was our home, our kitchen. And my dad always said that you should never put something in front of the customer that you wouldn't eat yourself, so we made sure all the food was good."

Two other staples of the Worcester diner scene are the Parkway Diner on Shrewsbury Street and Lou Roc's Diner on West Boylston Street. Both are examples of why you don't need to have a traditional dining car to have an incredible diner.

As Gutman pointed out, diners come with their own personalities, and these establishments are no exception. The Parkway provides both a diner, which is classic in its style and filled with brightly colored stools that seat you right up to the counter, and also a sports bar/dining room in the back. The sports bar area provides much more space for the party of 10 that might stop by looking to view the game.

Lou Roc's Diner may look unassuming from the outside, but step into this diner, and you'll find great food and almost unheard of portion sizes. On any given day, the crowds flock to this eatery, so expect to wait a little while to be seated. But when you get to your booth, you'll have some of the city's nicest people waiting on you, ready to suggest the perfect breakfast item. At Lou Roc's, owner Peter Prodromidis makes certain all of the details are taken care of, right down to making certain the coffee is always strong, hot and a great accompaniment to your meal.

When you come right down to it, however, you can get a good plate of eggs or a great cup of coffee at a number of well-known cafes or celebrated chain

restaurants. If you're pining for an Italian dish, you can head to a nearby bistro. So why do folks opt for the small, independently-owned diners?

A huge pull of the classic American diner is the atmosphere. When stopping by a coffee shop, you might find yourself waiting in line with about 15 other people, all of them with their eyes down, as they silently scan emails and text messages. They might even complete an entire transaction with the cashier without saying more than their four-word order. Then, they're off and running with their hot cups of latte and cold pastries.

One of the perks of being a regular at a Worcester-area diner is that the owners truly care about their customers. Wait staffs treat you with friendly kindness, whether it's your first visit or 91st visit. To put it simply, everybody knows your name, even if they don't.

"Diners are comfortable places. Anyone can go in, get some fresh, homemade food for a low price," Gutman said. "They're well known for purchasing local ingredients. And at diners, you won't see people looking at their phones as much because there's a lot of conversation that is going on. You're literally about 24 inches from the person next to you, so you're rubbing elbows. You're involved in their conversations and asking them to pass the salt or the pepper. It's also the kind of place where you have a relationship with the waitress and the wait staff."

Boulevard Diner's Jimmy George feels that the intimate environment allows him to do his job while forging great relationships with his clientele.

"You have time to mingle with people at a diner," George said. "You're cooking up the food right in front of them, and you get a chance to talk to them. And with diners, you get quality, quantity and fair pricing. That was something my dad, who owned this restaurant before me, always thought was the most important part."

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GREAT DINER MEMORIES

The Boulevard

When you work at a diner that's open 24/7, you see a lot of crazy things. Jimmy George, owner of the Boulevard, has witnessed his share of intoxicated people walk into his establishment and do things that they most likely regretted in the morning. He's also seen a number of Massachusetts bigwigs come and enjoy his delicious breakfast options. But George's favorite diner moment occurred when the Food Network show, *The Secret Life Of*, came to the Boulevard and taped a show. "We had so much fun. We were all laughing, having a great time," George said. "Sometimes, we had to stop rolling because we were having too much fun!"

Miss Worcester

Kim Kniskern remembered one crazy day at Miss Worcester when a gentleman came in, ready to propose to his love. "It was a great time," Kniskern said. "He had me make deep-fried Oreos and put the ring in one of the Oreos." It's doubtful that any girl (or guy) could say no to a delicious proposal like that!

Lou Roc's

Peter Prodromidis, of Lou Roc's diner, remembered when Fox News stopped by to feature the diner on its "Wednesday Morning Diner" segment as an exciting moment in Lou Roc history. The television crew spent most of the morning taping and interviewing customers as breakfast was being served. But despite the bright lights, Prodromidis remained humble. "I didn't feel that famous," he laughed. "But it was a lot of fun."



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George believes that everything on the menu is a crowd pleaser, but he has noticed that favorites vary depending on the generation. Many of the young people who visit the Boulevard today are crazy about omelets. Twenty years ago, the popular late-night choice was a pasta dish.

Miss Worcester offers something that you'll be hard pressed to find at many other restaurants ~ a huge variety of specialty French toasts. Order the S'mores French Toast, the Apple Pie Stuffed French Toast or the Cookies and Cream French Toast, and don't even think about hitting the gym. But aside from sweet breakfast treats, Kniskern said that a huge perk of her diner is the interaction.

"Miss Worcester is very small, so you always get to talk to me or whoever is working," says Kniskern. "We're like family here. I know pretty much everybody who comes in here."

At the Parkway, John Richards strongly recommends the meatball omelets for breakfast and the Italian Nachos for an appetizer, but admits that he eats just about everything on the menu and loves it. Over the seven years he's managed the diner, he's come to know many of the regulars who stop by for their "usuals" and always greets them with a smile.

"I grew up in this business. I knew it from a young age, and I've always wanted a sports bar," Richards said. "And with the extra room, I can do both the diner and the sports bar."

At Lou Roc's Diner, Peter Prodromidis said everything at the diner is good and he has a tricky time choosing just one item to rave about. Variety is the name of the game at Lou Roc's, with a menu that offers several different scrambled egg combinations. He also says the home-cooked hash can't be beat and is a

favorite of his regulars. But the board specials are what really keep the customers on their toes and always coming back for more.

"We have board specials for weekend breakfasts that change every week," Prodromidis said. "Things that you won't see at your average breakfast place. And for lunch, we make a bunch of homemade meals ~ Mondays we'll run chop suey; Tuesdays we'll run meatloaf; Wednesdays, pot roast; Thursdays are roast turkey and corn beef and cabbage; and Fridays we have fresh seafood."

No matter your personal tastes, no matter what time it is ~ there's a diner in Worcester that's open and just waiting for you to head on in and order up a plate of deliciousness, with a side order of greasy spoon history and welcoming personalities.

Athena Lazo

What it Takes to be a *Hero*

By Jennifer Russo



EDITOR'S NOTE: This article went to press before *The Hero's* final episode on Thursday, July 31.

At first glance, you can't help but notice that Athena Lazo, former *Patriot's* cheerleader and swimsuit model, is quite simply drop-dead gorgeous. Her dark features and perfect curves on the cover of *Pulse's* Swimsuit Issue last year had many wishing it was summer all year long.

But a deeper look shows that there is much more to Lazo than mere looks. They say beauty is skin deep, and in Lazo's case, that couldn't be more true. Beautiful inside and out, she is the personification of setting goals (and achieving them). It's hard to believe that Lazo herself admits that she is her own worst enemy.

"Nothing is ever good enough. I'll never be pretty enough or skinny enough in my own head. I don't know if it's the industries I have chosen to work in or being in the public eye that's done this to me, but I have an extreme self-image problem. I try to be confident and see myself as others do, but it's always been so hard. I'm my biggest critic."

Maybe that's why the Worcester native is so driven to succeed. As a contestant on TNT's new reality show *The Hero*, Lazo's drive and stamina has become even more critical. The show, hosted by Dwayne "The Rock" Johnson, tests every limit of each of the contestants' personalities, morals, selflessness, strength and determination in order to find a true hero. Contestants are met with temptations to see how they will sway, testing their integrity to its fullest extent. In the end, America will determine which competitor deserves the title of "Hero."

I asked Lazo what made her decide to compete on the show. Whereas some

people may be competing for themselves, she is doing this as an entirely selfless act for someone she loves dearly...her brother, who is only 13 months older.



"My brother suffered a brain stem tumor at the age of 4 and has had an extremely hard life. This past winter, he had a stroke. Once I knew there was a monetary prize involved, I knew what I had to do ~ win this for my brother. I didn't care what the snakes smelled like or that I could have been shot running through the streets of Colon. My bro can't work, and we don't know when he will be able to. He has an amazing attitude and has regained his ability to walk again and live again, but he is at risk of a stroke every single day. I knew the money would change his life, so I did it for him."

When not in the spotlight, Athena earned a degree in journalism and communications at Morrisville College (with a nearly perfect GPA, I might add) and currently works as a community relations director at a fitness academy, which she loves.

What's next for Athena Lazo?

"I'm done pursuing the 'what's next?' I've always wanted bigger and better. I've worked for Disney World as a character performer, then I went on to the NFL, now I'm on TV. I mean, how can you top that? I'll tell you how: by starting a family and starting to lay low. I'm ready to move on with my personal life. I've conquered everything cool, now it's time to settle down!"

Looks, brains and a really big heart ~ Lazo is a true everyday hero already, whether she wins the competition or not.

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UP AND COMERS

Tinnitus ~ awesome dudes, super-heavy band

By Alex Kantarelis

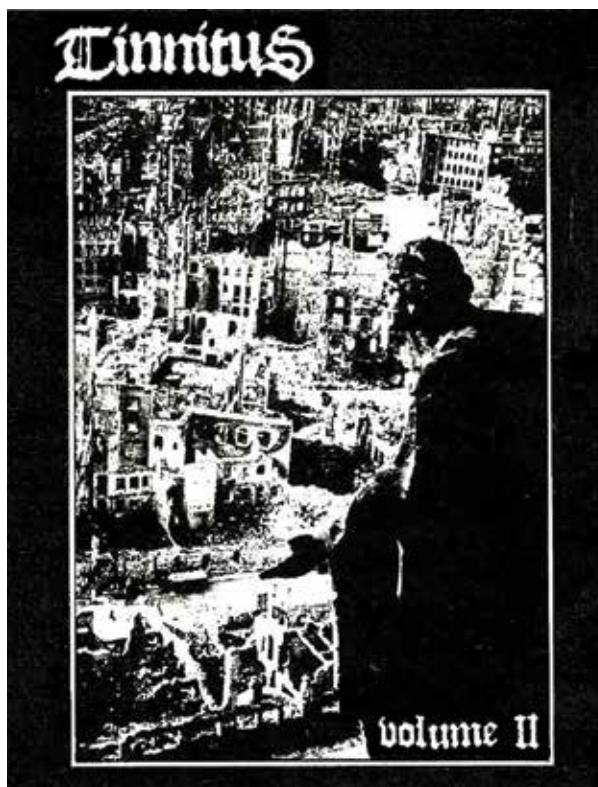
Tinnitus ~ hands down one of Worcester's heaviest bands ~ has recently released a new album and is looking forward to big things in the second half of 2013. The band is a mix between the power-violence sound of Infest and the sludge of Eyehategod. Guitarist and founding member, Ryan McArdle, described Tinnitus as a "grind-influenced hardcore band with more of a punk perspective. It's like if the Cro-Mags covered Napalm Death."

If that's your cup of tea and you're from Worcester, then you'll be glad to know the band has all its songs up on its Bandcamp page for free.

Tinnitus officially got started playing small punk shows in basements and at the now-defunct Wheelchair in Worcester in 2008. What started as something fun for a bunch of friends in high school quickly became something much bigger. By 2010, the band was in Western Massachusetts, recording at the legendary Dead Air Studios with producer "Chill" Will Killingsworth, who really knew how to capture its sound. The result was Tinnitus' first EP, *Gehenna*, which was quickly followed by an East Coast tour with Worcester punks Antietam. Word was spreading, and Tinnitus was building a solid reputation in the hardcore scene and playing shows all over the Northeast.

A few more tours and a couple of years went by; now the band is back with a new album, *Volume II*, which sees Tinnitus taking its sound to even darker and heavier levels. Engineered by Give Up The Ghost drummer, Alex Garcia-Rivera, *Volume II* is eight songs of the most brutal hardcore.

The band chose to record the songs live in the studio, instead of breaking down



each instrument, giving the album a frantic and raw feel and avoiding the all-too-common over-polishing that so many hardcore bands fall victim to in this Pro Tools world we now live in. Garcia-Rivera recorded the songs directly to tape on a vintage reel-to-reel machine from the '70s. It took the band members four hours to set up their gear and find the sound they liked and a half hour to shred through their songs, capturing everything all at once.

McArdle is a fan of analog recordings and is glad that all the recordings Tinnitus has released were done live and on tape. "There's something about recording live that really captures what the band is. It captures the sound that we are trying to do more ~ the real aggressive, in-your-face sound," McArdle said.

While the songs are currently available for download, vinyl nerds can still get their hands on a physical copy from Cricket Cemetery Records, which released a 7-inch version this summer.

August sees the band hitting the road for the third year in a row, in support of *Volume II*. The band's members are no strangers to the Firehouse and the Distant Castle and, occasionally, one of Worcester's clubs, too. While they'd be stoked

if you threw them some cash for their music on Bandcamp, they'd be just as stoked if you downloaded it for free.

"I think music should be free. If you want to support (a band), go to the show, buy a T-shirt. As long as people listen and have a good time, that's all I really care about," McArdle said.

Good attitude from a great band.

For free Tinnitus music and tour dates, check out tinnitusma.bandcamp.com.

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Black Sabbath ~ 13

By Jason Savio

"Is this the end of the beginning or the beginning of the end?" Ozzy Osbourne asks at the start of "End of the Beginning," the opening track on *13*, the first Ozzy-fronted Black Sabbath album in 35 years.

And it's a valid question. Given the miles the members of Sabbath have between them, one gets the impression that they're now old men playing a young man's game. But Osbourne, guitarist Tony Iommi and bassist Geezer Butler defy expectations and deliver an album worthy to stand alongside its predecessors. Super sourpuss and original drummer, Bill Ward, stayed at home, leaving the throne to the capable Brad Wilk, of Rage Against The Machine.

With the help of the bearded magician himself, producer Rick Rubin, Sabbath rekindles the dark magic of its heyday. Five of the eight songs are more than seven minutes long, with swinging tempo and riff changes in each, from heavy and brooding Godzilla-like stomps to spastic punk angst. Osbourne sounds revived and inspired while Iommi and Butler bristle on the ominous waltz of "God Is Dead?" and the singeing "Loner."

There is indeed a sense of urgency throughout, as if Osbourne & Co. are trying to make up for lost time before the record is through. When Osbourne sings, "No escape from here/Facing death but is your conscience clear?" on "Live Forever," it sounds like an honest reflection to heal old wounds before it's too late. They may be old, but they're not senile. If *13* is Sabbath's swan song, consider the band redeemed.

For tour dates and more, visit blacksabbath.com.



Girls' Generation ~ Girl's Generation

By Katey Khaos

If you're anything like me, you were excited when Psy's "Gangnam Style" made its premiere ... and pretty annoyed when it was being played everywhere you went for the next three months. I love when other countries' music infiltrates the airwaves ~ it's a nice culture shock for most people, including myself. That's why I was glad to see some more K-pop finding its way through by way of Girls' Generation.

The band's self-titled album has everything the average pop album would have ~ fast songs, a few slower songs mixed in and, of course, the catchy hits. In this case, the biggest hit off this album (at least in America) is "Run Devil Run." The ladies mix it up a little, adding a tad of English in, "You better run, run, run, run, run." I will warn you, this track is insanely addictive, and you'll find yourself singing the only line you can understand ~ unless, of course, you speak Korean or learn the lyrics!

Normally, I'm not a fan of slower K-pop songs because of the unneeded Auto-Tune that finds its way into almost all of them. However, with "Let It Rain," I was pleasantly surprised to find that the song was almost completely Auto-Tune free.

Girls' Generation is a great change of pace in music, especially if you're looking for something a little outside your comfort zone. The band is quirky, bubbly and offers up a different style of music that many of us aren't used to hearing!

For more information, visit girlsgenerationusa.com.



The Welch Boys ~ Bring Back the Fight

By Jennifer Russo

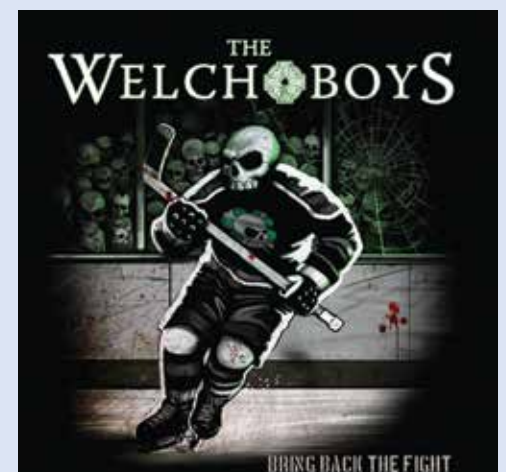
Whether you are from Boston or Worcester, Irish punk likely has a special place in your heart. Lord knows, the Dropkick Murphys have graced our eardrums and raised our adrenaline levels enough to bring out the shamrock in all of us, making us crave a Guinness or two (OK ... five).

Now, imagine that brand of music on a truckload of highly concentrated energy drinks, the kind of songs that just need to be played as sports anthems to get us pumped up and ready for the big game, and there you have it ... The Welch Boys in a nutshell.

The band's third and latest CD offering, *Bring Back the Fight*, completely and utterly brings it. What is the "it," you ask? East Coast hardcore at its finest, with catchy sing-along (or yell-along, as it may more accurately be described) choruses and backed by great melodic instrumentals. It brings that devil-may-care attitude, an angry "I can't believe the Bruins f'd up so badly" howl of rage and a contagious sound that scratches that itch we can't always reach.

Bring Back the Fight, which boasts a 16-track spread that includes both an intro and an outro, is perfect for a night out, party or car serenade ~ but what I found myself wishing was that I had it while studying for finals at 3 a.m. Its hard-hitting, keep-you-awake punkaliciousness is just what I could have used to get me through.

Check out The Welch Boys' official website at thewelchboys.net, like them on Facebook at facebook.com/thewelchboys and get their entire album on iTunes for \$9.99. (Please, spend your extra penny with care.)



Girl's GOT GAME

Battle of the consoles

By Katey Khaos

Deadpool: Let the hilarity ensue!

By Katey Khaos

Allow me to introduce you to *Deadpool*, the anti-hero known for his self-awareness. He's no Superman ~ he doesn't care about truth, honesty or justice. Instead, he's got his mind on over-the-top violence and busty women. *Deadpool* is out now for PC, PS3 and Xbox 360, offering up all of this and much, much more.

More, you say? To give you an example of the crazy scenarios you'll find: In the first 10 minutes of the game, I had to blow up a sex doll and make 1,000 pancakes. Totally normal for a video game, right? Sure, this game won't make you question the meaning of life, but for solid *Deadpool* fans, this game nails its protagonist to a T.

The best part of this game is the interactions that occur between Deadpool and the player. You'll find Deadpool making fun of you for errors, cursing the developers when he sees something in the game he doesn't like, and you'll even find him putting a finger to his mouth to imply being quiet as he sneaks up on an enemy.



The developers have managed to nail down the mechanics in this game, too. You've got all kinds of toys to play with, from katanas to guns. From long-range to short-range weapons, you'll find something to hack and slash with. You can also unleash "momentum attacks," special moves that you can use if you keep your combos going long enough. Using momentum is crucial, especially late in the game. Just like in the comics, Deadpool can also teleport in combat, which I think is much more satisfying than a dodge-roll combo that's all too familiar in fighting games.

OK, I've said a ton of positive things about this game, but there are a couple details that didn't thrill me. One-liners. Yes, there's a ton of well-scripted humor throughout the game, but the trash talk during combat gets old fast.

The other downside I've found is that the game is short (and if I were writing this as Deadpool, I'm sure a joke about the male anatomy would have been made ...now.) But seriously, the campaign is only about five hours long. I feel like the game is just ending when it's meeting its climax (hah).

TL; DR: Funny. Violent. Fast-Paced. Short.

More info on *Deadpool* can be found at deadpoolgame.com.

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Will Santana, owner of Santana Company, gives a client a haircut.



Jon Olson, owner of Jonathan's Barbershop, gives a customer a trim.

Camaraderie all the buzz at barbershops

By Maxine Giza

Step into the business at 934 Main St. in Worcester, and you will notice a buzz blending with the sounds of men laughing and chatting about LeBron James and Aaron Hernandez or what is happening on Wall Street. This isn't the address of a local bar, but rather, a place where a number of men congregate on a regular basis ~ a barbershop.

Men fill the chairs at Santana Company, a barbershop where owner Will Santana creates a community feeling among his patrons. "Historically, that feeling of (community) was the focal point of the barbershop," said Santana. "Everyone would come together and hang out."

The friendship among patrons is evident as they linger before and after getting their hair cut and beards trimmed. It's the feeling of brotherhood that keeps customers returning. "There are no egos here," remarked client Kiley Nortey.

A similar vibe can be felt at Hairmyth Barbershop in Worcester, where owner and barber Jeff LaDou said his business is a place where men can relax and be themselves in the shop's original antique barber chairs, set amid the New England sports memorabilia that adorns the walls.

"When men come to my shop, they feel comfortable and can hold a conversation in any manner they choose," said LaDou. "In a hair salon, guys have to censor their conversations."

Unlike many full-service hair salons, where patrons can find themselves having to schedule appointments weeks, if not months, in advance, customers can enter a barbershop and get the services they seek without much planning. At many hair salons, cutting a woman's usually longer hair, adding color or perm products and so forth can significantly increase the amount of time needed for each client.

Barbershops aren't just an urban oasis. At Jonathan's Barbershop in suburban Oxford, as soon as one haircut is finished, another man hops into the chair.



Men get a trim inside Santana Company barbershop.

Entering a barbershop, however, is more than a social experience. Call it a desire to relive the days of *Mad Men*, or perhaps it's the notion that only a barber has the experience and expertise to cut men's hair, but some men are going the "old-fashioned" route when it comes to their grooming needs.

"Contrary to what some say, men can be more picky [than women]," said Jon Olson, owner of Jonathan's Barbershop.

What kind of hairstyles are men seeking?

"In the old-time barber shops, the style was short and clean cut," said LaDou. "Over many years, hairstyles have changed to where men are leaving their hair longer and wearing more facial hair and mustaches."

Barbershops aren't just a place where older generations reminisce about old times. "I see a mix of ages come in here," said Olson, "From 93-year-olds to 5-year-olds."

While popular hairstyles may come and go, so do the tools used to achieve a desired look. LaDou said it's not about the tools a barber uses, but his talent.

"A lot of the younger guys want that sharp, crisp image that can only be achieved with a straight razor, or so they believe," said LaDou. "A talented barber can accomplish the same look with modern-day tools, but this age group is not convinced of that."

Whether it's a specific style or simply the masculine environment a customer is looking for, one thing is sure: The iconic swirling poll that is synonymous with barbershops has recaptured the interest and hearts of many. This popular piece of American history won't be going away any time soon.

Photos by Maxine Giza.

THE LIFE OF A WINE CONSULTANT

By Dorit Slotow

Dave Bodurtha has been a wine consultant at Classic Wine Imports for five years. Based in Norwood, the company was founded more than 40 years ago, with the idea of bringing classic wines to both Massachusetts and the United States.

"The original focus was on Boston's restaurant scene. The focus now has changed to all the best restaurants and retailers from Boston to the Berkshires," Bodurtha said. His passion for wines started with his career in the restaurant industry as a beverage manager.

As a wine consultant, it is very important for Bodurtha keep up to date with not only different wines but also different foods. Just as an important, Bodurtha must know his clients, which include Worcester's Niche Hospitality, owner of Mexcal, Bocado, Still & Stir and The Citizen Wine & Cheese Bar, as well as Leominster's Mezcal and Rye & Thyme.

"I work closely with both retailers and restaurateurs, tasting and selecting wines that best fit their philosophy. We try not only to stay on top of trends in the market but create our own without forgetting about the classics," he said. It is essential that a wine consultant knows how to best match up food and wine pairs in order to create a great combination, and Bodurtha gave us some insider information on how this is done: "Basic rule of thumb is the more delicate the dish, the lighter the wine; the more hearty the dish, the more full-bodied the wine."



When it comes to the daily life of a wine consultant, Bodurtha's career provides him with a lot of perks. Because this is also a sales position, Bodurtha has the opportunity to develop relationships with his customers. "I have met some great people and made lifelong friends in the business. Hosting wine dinners and doing retail tasting can also be a blast. I won't lie, though, I do get to taste some unbelievable wines!" he said.

Being a wine consultant can also be demanding and requires that he travels a lot and sees customers regularly. "I tend to have a lot of balls in the air and there never seems to be enough time to accomplish everything," Bodurtha admitted.

Bodurtha said Worcester's diversity is one of his favorite things about the area. "Diverse cultures equal diverse foods!"

Bodurtha also has his favorite food and wine pairings and believes in the motto that simpler is better. "A crisp, clean, mineral-driven white wine with oysters is perfection. As for red, I am really loving soft, elegant, feminine reds these days, paired with really good cheese and cured meats."

He believes that as wine drinkers, people should make sure that they expand their horizons and gives this advice: "Don't be afraid to ask questions at your favorite wine shop and to try new things. Life can be boring if you always play it safe. Try something new as often as you can. Tasting wine is all about new discoveries. I am always finding a new favorite."

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By Hans Osnabrugge
RingCredible

It's summertime, and that means vacation. You've crunched the numbers and you're going to stick to your budget on the big trip.

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By harnessing the power of the latest technologies, killer apps and hot new startups, you can budget for your trip, find the discounts you need and make sure you're calling home at the lowest possible rate.

Here are some of the hottest travel technologies to help you save money on your next trip.



Phone home cheap ~ Use VoIP

RingCredible: VoIP, or Voice-over Internet Protocol, is a simple and inexpensive solution that's used in many countries. Using VoIP, you can call anyone around the world for just a few cents. It's safe, it's easy, and you don't have to ask your contacts to download an additional app or create any profiles or accounts. Download the app, sign on with your regular phone number and make a call to any mobile or landline number.

Find free Internet

Wi-Fi Finder: Does your hotel charge an arm and a leg for Wi-Fi access? This is a useful app that you can use to find free Wi-Fi spots wherever you might be staying, so you can check your email.

Get smart about getting around

GateGuru: This is one of many mobile airport guides that will help you find what you need while you travel. This one even helps you get discount rental cars, in case your flight is canceled. Many airports have built apps that guide you through your flight schedule, airport dining and drinking and finding cheap parking.

AirportParking and Best Parking: Cut back on your parking fees by using these apps to find great deals and places to store your car while you're away or to find parking spots outside of the airport if you're traveling by caravan.

AllSubway: Why lose your money in overpriced taxis? This app maps out the subway system in 163 cities worldwide.

SaferTaxi: OK, if you insist on a taxi, the world offers you a smorgasbord of taxi apps that help you find safe, affordable solutions, like SaferTaxi if you're headed to South America. No more having to play the role of poor, confused tourist, which is an easy target for shady taxi drivers the world over.

Find deals and steals for restaurants

Wikitude: This is a great startup that lets you find mobile coupons and discounts for restaurants, stores and shops around you and allows you to scan your money and figure out exchange rates wherever you're at. You can also find ATMs, restaurants, user reviews and much more.

JetSetter: If you're in the middle of a trip and need to find new accommodations quick, check out JetSetter, which offers 60 percent off on same-day blind bookings. What's great is that this app gives you an insight into a hotel's neighborhood.

TippingBird: What you're used to tipping back home might be a small fortune to the country you're visiting on your vacation. This handy little app saves you money ~ and embarrassment ~ by giving you the tipping standards in various places around the world and in various settings (taxis, spas, hotels, etc).

TripSplitter: If you're traveling with friends or another family, this app lets you split the costs accordingly.

Track and save all your expenses

Moxtra.com: Use this app to completely organize your trip. Upload packing checklists, itineraries, visa requirements and travel tickets to folders that you can access from anywhere. This will save you grief in the future.

Expensify: Take this handy app overseas to track your purchases and transactions through syncing with your credit cards and bank accounts. You can also take pictures of all of your receipts and save them, so that when you get home, you'll have a PDF report of your spending.

Hans Osnabrugge, CEO of RingCredible and Partner at Brooklyn Ventures, has advised startups such as SoSocio and ValueWait, among many other global operations. He's an expert in mobile VoIP solutions and has extensive experience in the wealth management and startup sectors, where he has consistently netted proven results.

Home basics are not so basic with INSTYLE MODERN

Decorating our homes is one of the main ways we express our style. No matter how you express your individual taste, adding key, contemporary pieces from InStyle Modern can immediately change the look of your home ~ and you can do it without ruining your budget. Here are InStyle Modern's top picks to bring flair to your home.

TAKE A SEAT

There's nothing like grabbing a great book and getting cozy on a lazy afternoon. InStyle Modern offers a vast selection of chairs and relaxed seating that are not only comfortable but are also classically-modern.

The Rocker Chair (\$99) is definitely not your grandma's rocking chair. The Rocker Chair is a classic mid-century piece with a modern silhouette and sturdy, stainless steel legs.

If you'd like to get a little cozier, there are countless reading chair options. For example, the Swan Chair (\$325), originally designed by Arne Jacobsen, makes a fantastic addition to any space and is a nice spot to settle into with your favorite book. The Aristocrat Chair (\$575) comes in genuine leather, yet is modern and ultra-stylish. And, the Coconut Chair (\$549) allows you to settle into your book with form-fitted foam cushions.

EAT WELL

Whether you'd like to eat at your kitchen counter or at the table, InStyle Modern has something for you. If you're looking for a sleek table, the WoodLeg Dining Table (\$270) has a modern, but earthy, feel with its glass top and slender, wooden legs. The Style Wire Diamond Chair (\$119) adds a light and airy feel to your dining ensemble.

If you'd like to create modern accents at your kitchen counter, consider these great options: The Modern Wooden Bar Stool (\$174) has a unique, sculpted design and posture support and the Cafe Bar Chair (\$165) has a brushed aluminum finish that adds flavor to any kitchen.

SEE THE LIGHT

The right lighting brings perfect ambience to any room. InStyle Modern's Verner Pantone Style Globe Light (\$450), made from acrylic and aluminum, creates a unique lighting effect. The Spark Hanging Chandelier (\$299) symbolizes the harmony of planets orbiting a star.

If you'd like accent lighting on a side table or to illuminate a corner, try the Spun Tulip Style Table Lamp (\$175), which features a stainless steel lampshade and is a great way to provide general room lighting. The Arco Style Lamp Round Marble Base (\$199) offers ultra-modern styled light with a polished chrome shade.

CREATE COMFORT

When you need a break, you need a break. The Rattan Hanging Chair with



Stand (\$575) is a striking example of high-design for your outdoor (or indoor) living space.

Adding an end table in the favorite lounge area of your home makes the design complete.

The Eero Aarnio Parabel End Table (\$259) has distinguished asymmetry and unique curves for a contemporary lounge area. If nesting tables are your thing, the Marcel Breuer Nesting Tables (\$395) can be used separately or paired together for visual interest.

IT'S BEDTIME

If you're having overnight guests, InStyle Modern offers unique sleeper options.

The Romano Convertible Sofa Chair (\$499) provides versatility of form and simplicity that will work comfortably in any setting and the

conversion from couch to bed is very simplistic. Also, the Taupe Micro Twill Modern Sofa Bed (\$389) has a modern, yet comfortable, look and is a great addition to any room.

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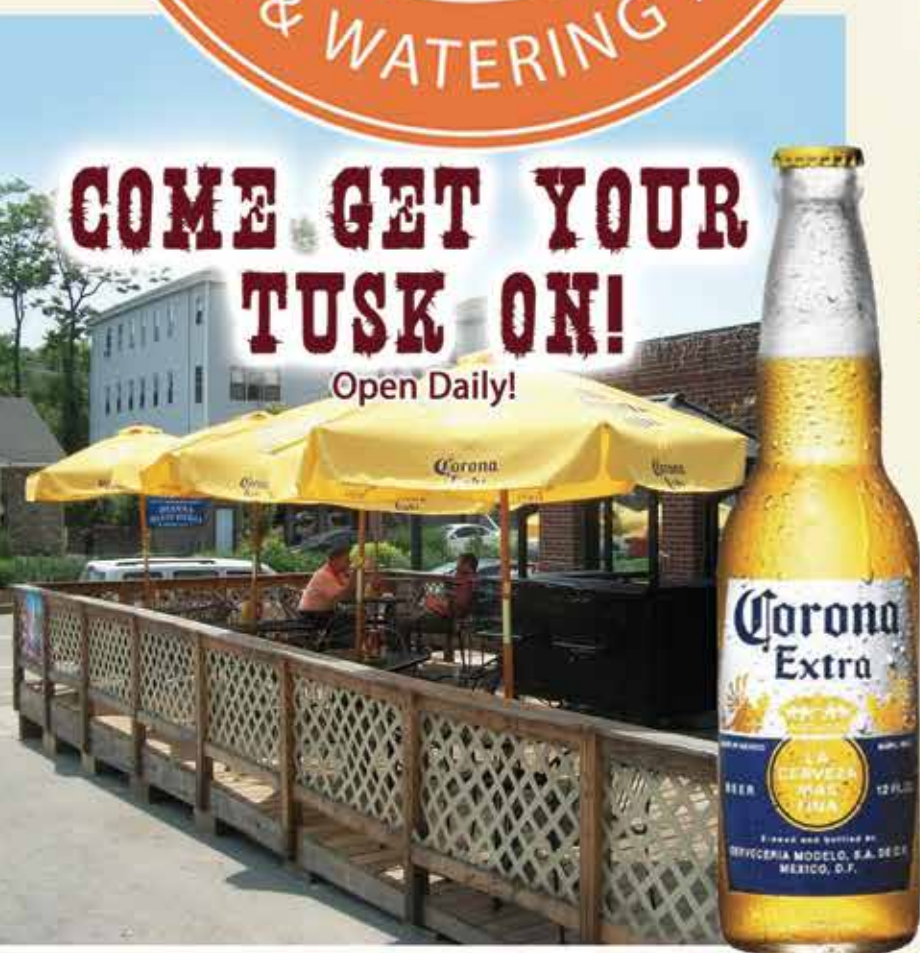
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Aug. 9: The Flock of Assholes
Aug. 10: Joker's Wild
Aug. 15: Summer Acoustic Series featuring Ken Macey
Aug. 17: Lacquerhead
Aug. 22: Summer Acoustic Series featuring Jodee Frawley
Aug. 23: Mullethead
Aug. 24: Aerochix (All Female Aerosmith Tribute)
Aug. 29: Summer Acoustic Series featuring Frank Hinkley
Aug. 30: Hot House
Aug. 31: The Feather Merchants

LaScala Restaurant
183 Shrewsbury St., Worc.
508-753-9912
lascalashrewsburystreet.com

The Lazy Dog
31 Main St., Marlborough
508-229-2264
doggonelazy.com

Legends
Airport Road, Fitchburg
978-342-6500
facebook.com/centericebar

Leitrim's Pub
265 Park Ave., Worc.
508-798-2447
leitrimspub.com

Loft 266 Bar & Lounge
266 Park Ave., Worc.
508-796-5177
loft266.com
Tuesdays: Game Show Live Trivia

London Billiards / Club Oasis
70 James St., Worc.
508-799-7655
londonbilliards.com

Lucky Dog Music Hall
89 Green St., Worc.
508-363-1888
luckydogmusic.com
Tuesdays: Contact Drum & Bass nights.
Aug. 3: The Flock Of A-Holes play a benefit show for Broken Tail Rescue with guests Quadraplane and The Funky Pets; Vegas trip raffle and more
Aug. 7: Mister Smarta** Theatre presents a live comedy take on the movie *Tarantula*
Aug. 8: Flock Of A-Holes, the ultimate '80s tribute band with Hot Letter and Michael Andreoli
Aug. 10: RiggaGoo, Hard Number 9 and more
Aug. 11: Burlesque show with The Boston Sprockettes as they present their *Cirque De Steam* (Steampunk themed) with guest band Morningside Lane

Mahoney's Pub
413 Park Ave., Worc.
508-277-1073
facebook.com/mahoneyspub.ma

Marty's Pub
225 Canterbury St., Worc.
508-754-0033
martyspub.com

MB Lounge
40 Grafton St., Worc.
508-799-4521
mblounge.com

McNally's Grille & Pub
88 Sargent Road, Westminster
978-874-1444
mcnallysgrille.com

Aug. 19: Amanda Cote Acoustic

Michael's Cigar Bar
1 Exchange Place, Worc.
508-459-9035
michaelscigar.com
Aug. 3: Invisible Sun, featuring the music of The Police with Chris Reddy, Scott Babineau, Bran Chaffee and Roger Stebbins
Aug. 7: Jodee Frawlee
Aug. 8: James Russo
Aug. 9: Bluelight Bandits
Aug. 10: Just Brad
Aug. 14: Ricky Duran
Aug. 15: Jim Devlin
Aug. 16: The Mystics
Aug. 17: Bill McCarthy
Aug. 17: Drive South
Aug. 22: Jon Bowser
Aug. 23: Bluelight Bandits
Aug. 24: Hit the Bus
Aug. 28: Ricky Duran
Aug. 29: Jodee Frawlee
Aug. 30: Andy Cummings

Mickey Sheas
324 Electric Ave., Lunenburg
978-342-5825

The Mill
185 W. Boylston St., W. Boylston
774-261-8585
themill185.com
Aug. 8: Dave Obrien
Aug. 9: Belit
Aug. 10: Bill McCarthy
Aug. 15: Jay Graham
Aug. 16: Steve Foley
Aug. 17: Rob Orciuch
Aug. 23: Andy Cummings
Aug. 24: Chris Reddy Acoustic Loops from Hell
Aug. 31: Chad Clements

Moynihan's Pub
897 Main St., Worc.

Nick's Bar and Restaurant
124 Millbury St., Worc.
508-753-4030
myspace.com/NicksWorcester
Fridays: Thank Fridays It's Dr. Nat

The Nines Neighborhood Bar
136 Millbury St., Worc.
508-340-0318

The Palladium
261 Main St., Worc.
508-797-9696
thepalladium.net

Pampas Churrascaria Restaurant
145 E. Central St., Worc.
508-757-1070
pampas-restaurant.com

Partner's Pub
970 South St., Fitchburg
978-345-5051
partnerspub.com

Patsie Dugan's
49 Millbury St., Worc.
508-755-4155
patsiedugans.com

Perfect Game Sports Grill and Lounge
64 Water St., Worc.
508-792-4263
perfectgameworcester.com
Wednesdays: Game Show Live Trivia
Wednesday through Aug. 28: Bike Night with Sheldon HD
Sundays: Open Mic Sundays with Bill McCarthy
Saturdays through Aug. 31: DJ Reckless

Fridays through Aug. 30: DJ One-3
Aug. 9: Bill McCarthy
Aug. 16: Drunken Uncles
Aug. 17: Charlie Scopoleti
Aug. 30: Bill McCarthy

Pho Dakao
593 Park Ave., Worc.
508-756-7555

Point Breeze On the Lake
114 Point Breeze Road, Webster
508-943-0404
pointbreezeonwebsterlake.com
Tuesdays: Open Mic

The Pumphouse
340 Main St., Southbridge
508-765-5473
facebook.com/#!/pages/The-Pump-House/374917818127?sk=info

Rage
105 Water St., Worc.
508-756-2223
rageworcester.com

Ralph's Chadwick Square Diner
148 Grove St., Worc.
508-753-9543
ralphsrockdiner.com
Sundays: Sunday Night Cinemageddon, drive-in movies in the parking lot
Tuesdays: See You Next Tuesday with DJ Poke Smot downstairs, guest DJ and bands, no cover
Thursdays: Metal Thursday
Sundays: Ralph's Flea Market and Famer's Market
Aug. 10: Henry's Wine
Aug. 31: Sheez Late

The Raven
258 Pleasant St., Worc.
508-304-8133
facebook.com/people/Raven-Worcester/100001022046717

Rivalry's Sports Bar
274 Shrewsbury St., Worc.
774-243-1100
rivalrysworcester.com
Thursdays: Blues Jam
Aug. 4: Bo and the Highlanders
Aug. 9: Babe Pino
Aug. 10: Tom Revane
Aug. 11: Mychael David and the Help Wanted Band
Aug. 15: Sean Ryan
Aug. 16: Drunken Uncles
Aug. 17: Three of a Kind
Aug. 18: Clamdigger
Aug. 22: Sean Ryan
Aug. 23: Take Two
Aug. 24: Josh Briggs
Aug. 25: Chad Clements

Rye & Thyme
14 Monument Square, Leominster
978-534-5900
ryeandthyme.com
Aug. 3: Jay Graham
Aug. 8: Chris Reddy Acoustic Loops from Hell
Aug. 9: Scott Babineau
Aug. 10: Now & Then
Aug. 15: Zack Slick
Aug. 16: Jay Graham
Aug. 17: Andy Cummings
Aug. 22: Chris Reddy Acoustic Loops from Hell
Aug. 23: L & M Rhythm Kings
Aug. 24: Scott Babineau with Ricky D
Aug. 29: Greg Tata
Aug. 30: Jay Graham
Aug. 31: Brian & Captain

SakuraTokyo
640 Park Ave., Worc.
508-792-1078, 508-792-1068
sakura-tokyo.com
Aug. 9-10: Windfall, classic rock cover band

Smoky Joe's/Rumors
371 Park Ave., Worc.
508-755-5542
clubuniverseworcester.com
Friday: Paint Party at Throwed (18-plus)

South Side Grille & Margarita Factory
242 W. Broadway, Gardner
978-632-1057
southsidemargaritafactory.com

Speakers Night Club
19 Weed St., Marlborough
508-480-8222
speakersnightclub.net
Thursdays: Pub Night ~ dance, drink and party
Fridays: Brazilian Dance Party

Squire Whites Pub & Restaurant
347 Greenwood St., Worc.
508-752-7544
squirewhites.com

Sunset Tiki Bar
79 Powers Road, Westford
978-692-5700
skinashoba.com/summer
Wednesdays through Aug. 28: Chris Reddy Acoustic Loops from Hell
Aug. 17: Chris Reddy Acoustic Loops from Hell

Tal's Place
138 Lake St., Webster
508-949-6559
talsplacewebster.com
Aug. 31: Dan Kirouac

Tammany Hall
43 Pleasant St., Worc.
508-753-7001
tammanyhallrocks.com

Three G's Sports Bar
152 Millbury St., Worc.
508-754-3516
3gs-sportsbar.com

Tweed's
231 Grove St., Worc.
508-755-8047
tweedspub.com

Union Music
142 Southbridge St., Worc.
508-753-3702
unionmusic.com

Victory Bar & Cigar
56 Shrewsbury St., Worc.
508-756-4747
victorycigarbar.com

Vincent's Bar
49 Suffolk St., Worc.
508-752-9439
myspace.com/vincentsbar
Sundays: Big Jon Short ~ solo acoustic country blues
Thursdays: The Housetones
Aug. 10: Second Saturday Spectacular (or Meatballs and Mayhem)

Wonder Bar Restaurant
121 Shrewsbury St., Worc.
508-752-9909
wonderbarrestaurant.net
Saturdays through Aug. 31: Wonder Bar Saturdays with Nat Needle

Travel finds they'll envy you for

By Merilee Kern

This year's summer travel season ushers in yet another impressive assortment of innovative gadgets and cleverly designed gear that makes it easier to get from point A to point B ~ and more enjoyable when you are there. Here's a roundup of some of my personal faves, sure to make you joyful while you jet set.



Slingbox

Never miss an episode of your favorite TV program again! With a Slingbox connected to a home cable box, families, businessmen, students and all other TV-loving travelers can stay connected to wherever home is and take their full television viewing experience on the go. This incredible device turns a laptop, tablet or smartphone into a portable television, ensuring you have unencumbered access to your personal entertainment. There are no monthly subscription fees or geographic boundaries. Wherever you have an Internet connection, Slingbox will deliver your favorite live local sports, TV shows, local news, on-demand and DVR content to the device of your choice.

\$99.99-\$299.99, Slingbox.com.

hipKey

Wouldn't it be nice to keep track of your luggage while it's en route or find it quickly if it gets misplaced? Now you can! HipKey is a small, crescent-shaped, app-enabled tracking accessory that attaches to any of your valuable items, such as luggage, handbags, keys, a child, etc. Using Bluetooth 4.0 technology, the device connects wirelessly to an iPhone (4S or 5) or an iPad (third or fourth generation or mini), using an application that provides four unique modes for keeping track of your valuables: Find Me Mode, Motion Mode, Alarm Mode and Child Mode. The device has a range of up to 50 meters, and once outside that range (or when the device detects motion), a 90-decibel alarm is sounded and accompanied by a clear vibration. The small compact design is durable and makes the hipKey easy to carry.



\$89.99, Store.Apple.com.



Chloe Dao Carry-on Luggage Set

This Chloe Dao Carry-on Trolley and Satchel two-piece set will let you travel with fabulous form and function. Designed by Project Runway winner Chloe Dao, this dynamic luggage duo will ensure you have those essentials neat and organized for those shorter jaunts that don't require large checked baggage. The trolley fits most overhead compartments and features inline skate wheels, ergonomic telescoping handle, 2-inch expansion zipper and a lightweight design. The matching laptop satchel features Dao's signature exterior "kangaroo" organizer pockets, 14-inch handle drop for maximum comfort, plenty of interior pockets and fits most 15-inch laptops.

\$159.99, store.nuo-tech.com.



Travelpro Crew 9 Rolling Tote

Crew 9 is Travelpro's super collection of premium luggage that includes rollaboards, totes and spinners. The long-standing baggage choice of flight crews and frequent travelers, the latest Crew collection is a leap forward in innovation, lightweight durability and effortless mobility. The rolling tote features the iconic PowerScope extension handle, which minimizes wobble and maximizes durability. The contour grip on spinners provides comfort and easy maneuverability. The rolling tote has been designed specifically for the frequent business and leisure traveler with performance features that work smartly together to make every aspect of the trip easier.

\$125.99, TravelPro.com.



PortaPocket Hands-Free Carrying Case

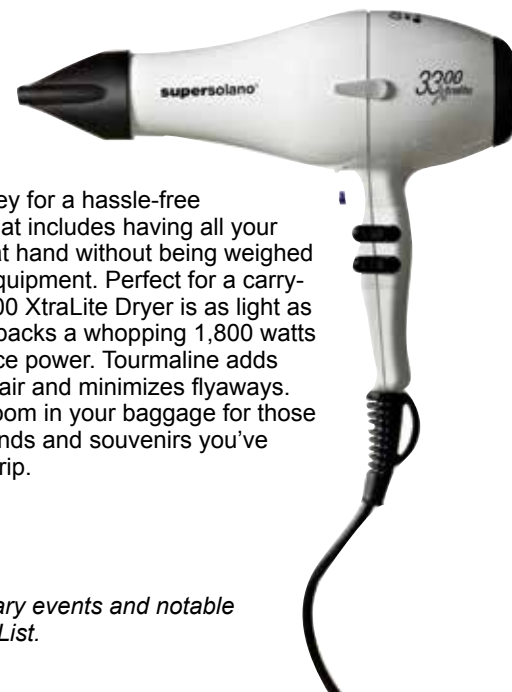
Fashion-savvy solutions for safety and convenience bring you peace of mind and confidence while you go about your day. One of these is the super-comfy, versatile and stylish problem-solver known as the PortaPocket Carrying case. Now, you can lose the worry, not your stuff, plus you can wear this posh pocket on its own or with a chic purse or bag. To keep your personal belongings safe and accessible, these carrying cases can be wrapped around a thigh, calf, ankle, arm or waist. They are easily detachable, interchangeable and easy to use as well as moisture- and sweat-resistant. The carrying cases are big enough to fit items like your identification card, credit/debit cards, keys, cell phones, lipstick, tampons, iPods, cameras, passports, medical devices and more.

\$25-\$35, PortaPocket.com.

Solano 3300 XtraLite Dryer

Traveling light is key for a hassle-free experience, and that includes having all your beauty style aids at hand without being weighed down with bulky equipment. Perfect for a carry-on, the Solano 3300 XtraLite Dryer is as light as a water bottle but packs a whopping 1,800 watts of high-performance power. Tourmaline adds shine, smoothes hair and minimizes flyaways. Now, you'll save room in your baggage for those fabulous fashion finds and souvenirs you've collected on your trip.

\$159, Ulta.com.



"The Luxe List" Executive Editor Merilee Kern scours the luxury marketplace for exemplary travel experiences, extraordinary events and notable products and services. Follow her on Twitter @LuxeListEditor and Facebook at facebook.com/TheLuxeList.

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thecollegeshuffle.com

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DINING & ENTERTAINING

Eat smart while eating out

By Matt DeWolf and Cindy Tenner
WooFood.org

Summer is in full swing. From picnics to baseball games to meeting up with family and friends at restaurants, it is the time of year that people are gathering together to enjoy food. Oftentimes when eating outside of your own home, it is difficult to maintain a diet that will promote long-term health. It's difficult, but not impossible, to eat sensibly while eating out. Eating out can be delicious and healthful if you're smart about your food choices.

Consider portion sizes at restaurants. We all like to get value for our dining dollar, thus our wallets appreciate large portions more than our waistlines do. Our suggestion is to have half of your meal wrapped up before it is brought out. By doing so, you eat half of the calories and you have a meal for the next day ~ it's like getting two meals for the price of one.

Another helpful tip is to scan the menu and look for items that are prepared in a healthful way. The words "grilled," "broiled," "steamed" or "raw" are usually good indicators of healthy dishes. Next, when looking over the menu, try to create a meal for yourself that has 50 percent fruits and vegetables. This can often be accomplished by specifying the type of sides that come with your meal, so ask what options are available. Summer is an ideal time to expand the repertoire of fruits and vegetables you eat. Many restaurants source their fruits and vegetables locally in the summer, so they are fresh and delicious. You may find watermelon in a salad or grilled peaches featured on a menu. Peas, green beans, corn and tomatoes are summer favorites for many people.

Now that your main entrée and side dishes are selected, consider getting dressing or sauces on the side to reduce the amount of sodium and calories in your food. Dressings on salad, gravy on meats and other toppings often contribute a surprising amount of calories that can be reduced simply by ordering them on the side and using them sparingly. Try dipping your fork into the dressing and then into your salad for each bite, rather than putting the whole serving of dressing directly on the food. It is surprising how much this small amount will enhance the food, yet allow it to retain its taste. With these

adjustments, you can enjoy a delicious meal with family and friends while knowing that you are taking care of your well-being.



Now that you have created the perfect meal that combines taste and health, don't ruin it with your drink! Think of fun drinks that do not add lots of calories, sugar or chemicals. Ask what options the restaurant has. Consider something like flavored seltzer or water with lemon, lime or some other fruit. If the restaurant is trendy it may have fruit-infused water. Or try the newest trend ~ water with a slice of cucumber.

To make it easier to eat delicious, healthful foods in restaurants, Worcester is lucky enough to have WooFood. WooFood is a certification program that was born from the idea that it is possible to combine great taste with healthful options ~ and that this should be easy in restaurants. When going into a WooFood-certified restaurant, you can expect to find ways to reduce portion sizes ~ either through the Dinner for Now Tomorrow's Chow, where half of the meal is wrapped up before it gets brought out, or the availability of half-size options or small dishes. There are also options available that meet the WooFood standards, which include 50 percent fruits and/or vegetables, limited salt and a variety of other requirements. A key component to the WooFood certification is that the food must taste good. We have worked with the chefs to create meal items that incorporate all of the above and simplify the process for you, creating a great dining experience!

WooFood Certified restaurants include Garden Fresh, Sweet, Le Mirage, WooBerry, Museum Café at the Worcester Art Museum, the Flying Rhino, Coral Seafood, SAVOR at the DCU Center, Nu Café, and Café Manzi's.

Paul Barber, owner of the Flying Rhino, summed up the value of WooFood: "We want our guests to enjoy their meals while staying healthy so they can continue to be active in our community for a long time."

To learn more about WooFood, visit woofood.org.

Hot & Now

By Paul Giorgio

Worcester Restaurant Week kicks off. The semiannual summer edition of Worcester Restaurant Week kicks off Aug. 5 and goes until Aug. 17. For \$23.13, you can get a three-course meal at participating restaurants. Visit the website ~ worcesterrestaurantweek.com ~ for a full listing of participating eateries. New restaurants come on, so recheck the website. Restaurant week is produced by Pagio, Inc., parent company of *Pulse* magazine and is sponsored by UniBank, Pepsi, Stella Artois Beer, Mercadante Funeral Home and American Express and supported by Percy's and Integrity Merchant Solutions. Media partners include WXLO, WORC-FM, The Pike & WCRN 830 AM, as well as TasteWorcester.com

Johnny Fugata opens. John Piccolo's new restaurant, Johnny Fugata, opened in the middle of July. The restaurant is located on Worcester's Belmont Street, just a stone's throw from the medical school. Piccolo has partnered with Michael Bernier, who formerly ran the kitchen at Leicester Country Club and has worked with Piccolo in a number of his restaurants. Johnny Fugata's will serve Italian food. And no, we don't know what the name means either.

Haiku sold. It appears that Haiku Restaurant on Worcester's Park Avenue has been sold to the people who own Shrewsbury Street's Kenich Restaurant. No news as to when the new owners will take over. The famous Kenzo Phan was the chef at Haiku, and we will keep you posted as to where he lands. Phan has become a Worcester institution since he arrived here from Montreal.

Along the Blackstone. Blackstone Bistro is about to open on Worcester's Greenwood Street, in the space that formerly housed Sweet T Southern Restaurant. Luis Pizano is the owner and chef of what is billed as a classic American bistro. Pizano is a graduate of Johnson & Wales University and was the chef at Il Forno for a number of years before going to work at Chestnuts Café in downtown Worcester.

Now there are two. The Manor in West Boylston has split into two spaces. The Fotiadis family, long-time owners of The Manor, has redone the restaurant space and given that a new look and name ~ Draught House Bar & Grill. As you might expect, there are more than 30 beers on tap. The function space will still be called The Manor.

Too hot to cook? When it's too hot to cook, try pizza. A few places in Worcester are offering deals on pizza ~ America's favorite fast food. Leo's Ristorante on Shrewsbury Street offers 2 for 1 pizza on Wednesday nights. Their backyard neighbor, Volturmo, offers 2 for 1 pizza at the bar on Mondays and Tuesdays. If you are across town, try Park Grill for its 2 for 1 small pizza, also on Monday and Tuesday

Coyotes eat burgers? The Hungry Coyote recently opened at 500 Park Ave. in Worcester, which was the home of Friendly's for a long time. The Hungry Coyote opened at the end of June. In addition to burgers, the restaurant serves retro hot dogs, ice cream treats and chicken. It appears that the burger wars may be heating up soon.

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Worcester Restaurant Week is full of flavor

It's time for Worcester Restaurant Week. Central Massachusetts is known for having great food at reasonable prices, but twice a year, local chefs take their prices down even more. From Aug. 5-18, check out special menus at local restaurants for \$23.13!

Got a favorite restaurant or want to discover a new favorite? Worcester Restaurant Week is the time to get out and dine!

For more information, check out worcesterrestaurantweek.com and [facebook.com/worcesterrestaurantweek](https://www.facebook.com/worcesterrestaurantweek).

Sponsored by Pepsi, UniBank, Blue Moon, Wachusett Brewery, Harpoon, Samuel Adams, Mercadante Funeral Home, The Pike 100 FM, WXLO 104.5 FM, WORC 98.0 FM, WCRN 830 AM, Vitality Magazine, TasteWorcester.com and Pulse, participating restaurants include:

- Menu -

Worcester

7 Nana

60 Shrewsbury St.
(508) 755-8888
7nanasteakhouseworcester.com

111 Chop House

111 Shrewsbury St.
(508) 799-4111
111chophouse.com

Armsby Abbey

144 Main St.
(508) 795-1012
armsbyabbey.com

Bocado Tapas Wine Bar & Restaurant

82 Winter St.
(508) 797-1011
bocadotapasbar.com

Brew City

104 Shrewsbury St.
(508) 752-3862
brew-city.com

The Canal Restaurant & Bar

65 Water St.
(508) 926-8353
facebook.com/canalbarandgrill

Ceres Bistro

363 Plantation St.
(508) 757-2000
ceresbistro.com

Coral

225 Shrewsbury St.
(508) 755-8331
coralseafood.com

El Basha

424 Belmont St.
(508) 797-0884
258 Park Ave.
(508) 795-0222
elbasharestaurant.com

EVO

234 Chandler St.
(508) 459-4240
evodining.com

Flying Rhino

278 Shrewsbury St.
(508) 757-1450
flyingrhinocafe.com

Grill on the Hill

1929 Skyline Drive
(508) 854-1704
grillonthehill.net

Joey's Bar & Grill

344 Chandler St.
(508) 797-3800
joeysbargrill.com

Johnny Fugata

394 Belmont St.
(508) 459-0121
johnnyfugata.net

LaScala

183 Shrewsbury St.
(508) 753-9912
lascalashrewsburystreet.com

Le Mirage

120 June St.
(508) 793-8558
lemiragerestaurant.com

Leo's Ristorante

11 Leo Turo Way
(508) 753-9490
leosristorante.net

Loft 266

266 Park Ave.
(508) 796-5177
loft266.com

Mare E Monti Trattoria

19 Wall St.
(508) 767-1800
mareemontitrattoria.com

Mezcal Cantina

166 Shrewsbury St.
(508) 926-8307
mezcalcantina.com

Northworks Bar & Grill

106 Grove St.
(508) 755-9657
northworks.com

Nuovo

92 Shrewsbury St.
(508) 796-5915
nuovoworcester.com

O'Connor's

1160 W. Boylston St.
(508) 853-0789
oconnorsrestaurant.com

Park Grill

257 Park Ave.
(508) 756-7995
parkgrillworc.com

People's Kitchen

1 Exchange Place
(508) 926-8400
1nicheexchange.com

Peppercorns

455 Park Ave.
(508) 752-7711
epeppercorns.com

Piccolo's Italian Restaurant

157 Shrewsbury St.
(508) 754-1057
piccolos157.com

Ritual

281 Main St.
(508) 762-9501
ritualworcester.com

Rosalina's Kitchen

83 Hamilton St.
(508) 926-8887
rosalinaskitchen.com

The Sole Proprietor

118 Highland St.
(508) 798-3474
thesole.com

Tatnuck Grille

638 Chandler St.
(508) 792-0000
tatnuckgrille.com

Tweeds

229 Grove St.
(508) 755-8047
tweedspub.com

Via Italian Table

89 Shrewsbury St.
(508) 754-4842
viaitaliantable.com

Vintage Grille

346 Shrewsbury St.
(508) 752-0558
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Bentley Pub brings the Pic back to its roots

By Bernie Whitmore

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The demise of the Piccadilly Pub empire signaled the end of an era of casual low-cost dining in central Massachusetts that started back in the early 1970s. Its continuous growth was based upon a reputation for value and quality. Who didn't like the Pic?

Then, early last year, it all came to a screeching halt.

But in Auburn, the original owner has taken things back to their roots by renaming and re-opening the pub that stands on the corner of Route 20. On the evening a friend and I sat down for dinner at this "new" enterprise, Bentley Pub, we had the good fortune of being served by Fraser, who worked for the Piccadilly group forever and was pleased to offer a brief history of the place.

In name it may have changed, but Bentley's decor is pleasingly retro, with lots of private-feeling nooks swathed in lustrous knotty pine. It gleams in shiny golden tones. Overhead are massive wooden beams set on brick piers. Hanging pots of ivy contribute to the '70s-ish feel.

Fortunately, Bentley's menu isn't a holdover from the Age of Abba. Back then, fancy beer was anything skunky from Europe. The age of micro-breweries has changed all that, and Bentley's has a respectable offering. I chose a glass of Third Shift Amber Lager from Fort Worth, Texas. This clear, deep amber brew was topped with a half-inch of head and had bright, bitter flavor.

In true Piccadilly tradition, we were served bowls of salted popcorn and, to my astonishment, a plate of Ritz crackers with a small crock of cottage cheese dip, spicy with pepper sauce. Now, that's something I haven't seen in decades! Bentley's was zestier than the old recipe and remains as addictive as ever.

My friend started his meal with a cup of Lobster Bisque; the menu noted it was flavored with a touch of sherry. Normally, I avoid anything "touched" by sherry. But with each spoonful, my friend raved, "This bisque is extraordinary! Full of lobster flavor!"

I grabbed a spoon for a sampling. Shreds of lobster meat were evenly distributed throughout the creamy mixture, and flavors were perfectly balanced to showcase the delicate seafood.

This delightful start to our meal was followed by another surprising high point, Bentley's Crab Cakes. Proclaimed by the menu as 100 percent Canadian lump crabmeat, two cakes were pan-fried to a crusty, golden brown on each side and, for lack of starchy binders, just flaked apart with flavorful crabmeat.



The only off note was the lemon aioli sauce served in a small crock. Any aioli I've had (or made) is egg yolk-based ~ mayonnaise from the jar or freshly made. Then, perhaps, some garlic, lemon, Dijon. ... Bentley's was pure white, and when I inquired, I was told that it was cream cheese, sour cream and lemon. Tasty, yes. Aioli, not in a traditional sense.



One of the blackboard specials was a baked scallop dish. Piquing my interest, I asked Fraser for some additional information. Her reply swept us up into a lavish world of lemony butter sauce, perfect scallops and a tasty crumb crust. She was so vivid and in love with this dish that when she walked away, my friend and I just stared at each other and gasped, "Did that really just happen?" Such enthusiasm is a wonderful thing.



Of course, I ordered the Scallop Casserole Special.

A dozen sea scallops came in a round baking dish delivered directly from a fiery-hot oven. The coating of crumbs had formed a crunchy brown crust that encased the still-tender scallops in a light lemon butter sauce. My meal came with delicious, fresh garlicky green beans and Bentley's rice pilaf ~ like traditional pilaf, only with flecks of sweet red pepper.

My dining companion was torn with indecision. Deep Fried Seafood Platter or Whole Belly Fried Clams? Again, Fraser made this decision a snap, "With the platter you get *everything*! Clams, shrimp, haddock and big sea scallops. Yeah... you gotta have that!"

And so it was. He reported the Seafood Platter as huge, fried in light, fresh oil, so that each piece of seafood retained its unique flavor. Four to six specimens of each type of seafood were mounded over a bed of french fries. Fraser boxed up the leftovers for my friend to take home.

Summer just isn't complete without a big plate of deep-fried fish, is it?

Bentley's has everything going for it: location, an atmosphere that encourages groups of family and friends and talented professionals on staff. Beyond all that, Bentley's cuisine takes the Pub format to new heights.

PulseBrew: GO FOR BOLD FLAVORS

By Kerry Cyganiewicz

Looking to get out of your beer rut and try something different? Here are six beers, three brewed right here in Massachusetts, that are sure to be different from anything you are currently drinking. Cheers!



Moa Imperial Stout IPA (10.2% ABV)

This is a Russian imperial stout aged in pinot noir casks. It smells of warm coffee, chocolate and a hint of berry. It poured pitch black, with an enormous head that went away slowly, leaving a trail of foam down the glass. The taste matched the aroma, only better. The beer changed slightly as I drank it, making each sip different. The mouthfeel was full with each sip, almost like the beer expanded to touch all of your taste before it left as quickly as it came, leaving a slight pleasant aftertaste. A very drinkable beer that begs to be sipped over time.

Sierra Nevada Torpedo IPA (7.2% ABV)

Sierra Nevada named this American Indian pale ale after a contraption that dry hops this beer while it is being fermented to give it even more hop flavor and aroma. As soon as you pop the cap, there is an amazing aroma of citrus, melon, straw and assorted hard-to-place floral notes. It pours a clear, dark copper with a small head. The taste was a balance of sweet malt and hop bitterness with an enjoyable hop flavor, much like the aroma. Mouthfeel is on the light side, making this a beer that sneaks up on you. This is not a session beer.

Stone Enjoy By (9.4% ABV)

Stone makes this double IPA to be drunk quickly. Freshness is the angle here with a prominent sell-by date, and that it was. It poured a clear copper with a respectably sized, two-fingered head. Aromas of pine, citrus and muted tropical fruit paired with a slightly sweet, malty background. The balance of malt and pine dominated the taste, with slight notes of citrus and melon in the background. Mouthfeel was on the light side with an almost nonexistent, pleasant aftertaste, making this enjoyable to drink. The alcohol is somehow magically hidden, as I have found on many of Stone's offerings.



Jack's Abbey Smoke and Dagger (5.8% ABV)

This is a rachbier, a traditional German beer using smoked malt to add another dimension to the flavor profile. It poured a crystal-clear dark brown with a tan head. It smelled of coffee, vanilla and a distant campfire. It tasted of sweet coffee and roasted malt with little to no bitterness. It was soft on the palate, almost creamy with a toasty-warm, clean finish. This is almost like sitting around a campfire, no matter where you are. This is brewed right here in Framingham.

Element Extra Special Oak (7.75% ABV)

This oak barrel-aged English strong ale is another Massachusetts beer, brewed over in Millers Falls. It poured a gorgeous amber color with an amazingly large and long-lasting head and tons of lace on the glass. Vanilla, oak, biscuit, light citrus and cereal notes are what wafted up from the first pour. It tasted of oak and malt. It sounds boring, but it is not. The flavors danced in my mouth. The warming effects of alcohol are present with a light oak finish.



Gardner Ale House Endless Summer (3.3% ABV)

A kolsch is a difficult beer to get right. It is a lighter style of beer that originated in Cologne, Germany, before the invention of lagers. An excellent example is available right here in Gardner. Endless Summer poured a light straw color with a small, long-lasting head. An aroma of raw grains, malt, hops (slightly) and a general pleasant earthiness are present. It is easy to have a slight sulphur odor because of the yeast used, but the brewer avoided this. Hats off to you, sir! Mouthfeel was light; taste was a welcome subtle sweetness with very little bitterness from the hops and no lingering aftertaste.

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Fresh, local food ~ it's out there

By Benjamin McNeil

I didn't want to know what the two cheeseburgers I'd just scarfed down consisted of, but now, I'm hesitant to set foot in another fast food joint. The bun alone consists of more than 20 ingredients, most of which are lab-produced chemicals that I can't pronounce. These foods/exercises in chemical experimentation are not only sold by fast food places, however; just walk down any supermarket aisle.

As focus on local, healthy food grows, New Lands Farm and YouthGROW offer a wholesome alternative to this artificial smorgasbord.

New Lands Farm is a refugee farmer collective in Sutton. Thirty-five refugee families from the former Soviet Union, D.R. Congo, Somalia, Vietnam and elsewhere, most of whom were subsistence farmers in their homeland, are granted land on Silvermine Farm to grow traditional dietary staples to eat, share or sell.

"New Lands Farm's mission is to empower new Americans through agricultural projects to honor their food traditions, earn supplemental income and contribute in a meaningful way to their new community and the local food system," Agriculture Program Specialist Ashley Carter said with enthusiastic conviction.

Opened in 2008 under the Lutheran Social Services mission, the farm has proven wildly popular throughout Worcester County and Springfield (New Lands Farms' pilot location). Carter, who joined the initiative in December 2011, has seen participation grow from 10 to 35 families.

"I always find it profound to connect with everyone through food," said Carter, who has gotten to know nearly every family. "They love it; hands down...it's a great way for everyone to connect cross-culturally, and it's easy to interact with everyone on the farm." The program enables families to grow fresh food, learn American farming techniques and promote sustainable agriculture throughout the county.

YouthGROW (Youths Growing Organics in Worcester), initiated by the Regional Environmental Council of Central Mass, is a youth development program that has been in operation since 2003.

"We've grown and changed a lot over that time, from a drop-in urban garden site to a year-round program that employs 32 low-income youth from the Main South and Bell Hill communities," explained Grace Duffy, program coordinator for YouthGROW. "Students grow over 2,500 pounds of produce in Grant Square Park during the summer. This food is consumed by the youth staff, donated or sold at mission-based farmers' markets throughout Worcester.

The teenage employment rate in American has fallen dramatically, from 53 percent in 1999 to a mere 26.8 percent in late 2012. "I think that one of YouthGROW's greatest strengths is our ability to foster authentic youth leadership in the Worcester community. We are a consensus-driven program and make all major program decisions as a group with every voice being heard and valued equally," Duffy said, describing the program as "the new face of the food justice movement."

So if you're out grocery shopping (or hunting for fast food) this summer, why not go organic? You'll be helping out two excellent community programs.

For more information about New Lands Farm, visit Issne.org/NewLandsFarm.aspx. For information about YouthGROW, visit recworchester.org/what-we-do/food-justice-2/youthgrow.



Beers For Good

By Kerry Cyganiewicz

On June 29, The Nashoba River Brewers Festival, also called Beers For Good, was held at Riverfront Park in Fitchburg. There was live music, a handful of food vendors and 39 breweries in attendance. Fifteen dollars got you into the event and a 4-ounce tasting cup. Tasting tickets were \$1 each and entitled you to sample any of the beers from any of the breweries in attendance. This event was staffed by volunteers, with all of the proceeds going to local charities. Here were some of my favorites:

Jack's Abbey ~ Framingham

I had written about Smoke and Dagger elsewhere in this issue. Hoponius Union was another offering that caught my attention. This is an imperial pale lager. This is different from ale in that it is cold fermented to give a smoother finish, among other things. It was a welcome addition to an unusually warm day. Jack's had a vast selection of beers, but I had many others to try. I look forward to trying the Framinghamer Baltic Port in the future.

People's Pint ~ Greenfield

I had heard about this brew pub from some friends that live near there. I regret not having visited. I met Wardell Woodley, sales and distribution manager, at the taps, pouring beer with a smile on his face. I tried a sample of Farmer Brown Ale and was mesmerized by its flavor profile. Light on the hops, with a toffee, caramel and chocolate sweetness, it was a nice change from the floral hop profile of other offerings. This was one of the few beers that I had a second sample of.



Gardner Ale House ~ Gardner

This is one of the breweries that had the actual brewers pouring beer and interacting with people. The brewer poured a kolsch, a light German ale, which is a special style of beer for me. I won best of show in a large homebrew competition with a kolsch that I had brewed. Gardner Ale House won something a little bigger with this kolsch ~ a gold medal at the 2001 Great International Beer Festival. It was light, full of flavor and lacking the undesirable aftertaste of sulfur that is common in kolschs not brewed properly. The brewers were pouring many other beers, but even at 4 ounces at a time, the alcohol still adds up.

Element Brewing ~ Millers Falls

The actual owners were manning the taps at their station. They offered a selection of bigger beers, not common at these types of events. I tried the Extra Special Oak. It is an English strong ale aged in oak. Vanilla and biscuit sweetness gave way to a dry oak citrus finish. An amazing value at \$1 for 4 ounces. Most brew pubs would consider 8 ounces a serving and charge you much more. Here, you can speak with the person who made the beer you are enjoying. I look forward to savoring a larger serving over time to see how the flavors develop as the beer warms.

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So where should you start? Most dating coaches will agree that the single most important factor influencing the first impression is how you look; specifically, what you are wearing and how you are wearing it.

A New York University study shows first impressions are formed in the first seven seconds of a meeting, and appearance is a large part of that impression. Therefore, you really don't have much time to ensure you make a good first impression.

That's why Jennifer Kelton was inspired to create a new online fashion service for daters: DressfortheDate.com (DFTD). Inspired by her own experiences with online dating when it was still taboo in 2006, Kelton created and launched the popular site BadOnlineDates.com in 2007, the first website to allow people to meet and connect based on their shared bad date experiences.



Kelton realized that many of the complaints, stories and questions BadOnlineDates.com users expressed were related to dressing for dates. Whether it was someone complaining about what a date wore or someone seeking advice on how to dress for a first date, Kelton realized that, in general, people don't know how to dress appropriately for dating. With Kelton's background in launching various fashion lines, she decided to combine her expertise in style and dating to create DFTD.

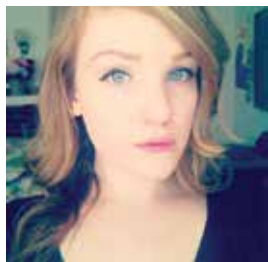
DFTD stylists are experts at working with a client's existing wardrobe and/or shopping at stores within their budgets (even thrift stores). DFTD services start as low as \$20 and offer virtual consultations using Skype, Google Hangouts or FaceTime. DFTD caters to clients that are all shapes and sizes, every type of lifestyle and stage of life.

If you're in the dating world, DFTD is the go-to resource for putting your best foot (and outfit) forward.

Photo (left): Jennifer Kelton, courtesy of Dress for the Date.

Get creative with homemade and recycled fashion

By Stacia Kindler



Stacia Kindler

With summer fun in full swing, plans pile up and fashion funds dwindle, as painful penny-pinching forces the fashion-hungry to choose between dinner and drinks or your latest obsession in the shop window. Luckily, there are things we can do to update our wardrobes that cost close to nothing compared to that designer dress (even on eBay), which is why this month is all about the babe on a budget.

As a large portion of current styles try their hardest to mimic the vintage aesthetic in all of its destroyed and stained glory, the questionable authenticity comes at a price ~ a price too high for most. Fortunately, even for the artistically lacking, two things may save you and your money while providing a much needed update: homemade and recycled fashion. So quit overlooking your local thrift store and don't be afraid to get creative ~ because a lot of the latest and most popular trends are often just a snip away.

The resurgence of thrift store shopping and the do-it-yourself mentality rushed back into popularity with the widespread loss of jobs and downfall of the economy. A lot of people stopped looking for the most convenient way to do things and started working with what they already had, thus bringing back the huge popularity of home improvement and fashion DIY projects. The DIY way of life remains relevant and bigger than ever, as countless fashion blogs, magazines, YouTube channels and TV shows suggest that if you want it, you can make it.

So many trends right now ~ from high-low dresses and skirts to crop tops and oversized vintage T's to studded and embellished denim ~ are so easily attainable with just a little bit of imagination and, of course, a little help from the Internet.

A good plan for thrift shopping is to actually have one. Start to build a shopping bag of clothing from your favorite online store or make blogs and websites like Pinterest your shopping partner. Doing your research will help you to see the potential of a great garment in an iffy setting. Which brings me to the most important rule of thrift shopping: Give yourself plenty of time! It is easy to become overwhelmed by the ocean of packed clothing racks and frantically push through the drab holiday sweaters and mom jeans, unknowingly passing by something with huge potential.

Keep your mind open and let it race with possibilities while you shuffle through the myriad options of secondhand clothing. Those gaudy '90s flares would look great as cutoffs, and that old baseball graphic would be rad cut into a crop top. Don't like the buttons? Replace them! Use a garment with nothing other than a great print as a jacket patch.

As you continue to play with the countless possibilities of thrifted treasures, you might find that just about anything can be made totally new. That's when shopping thrift stops being about saving money and starts being about putting your own personal touch on your favorite things.

Happy hunting!



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New Miracle Skin Transformer Acne Control

This acne treatment fights "pimple memory" ~ recurring breakouts in the same spot. Smart salicylic acid, anti-microbial peptides, marine extracts and vitamin B3 work together to heal and prevent breakouts now and in the future. The product reduces oil production, soothes redness and can even cover the appearance of acne marks.

This lightweight, oil-free formula controls shine and sebum, leaving a smooth, matte, flawless finish as it hydrates, firms and calms skin. Available in five shades: Translucent, Light, Medium, Tan and Dark.

\$48; available at Sephora stores nationwide and sephora.com and miracleskintransformer.com.

Bye BB; hello, CC

Pür Minerals has come out with a new CC Cream with SPF 40. Pür's CC protects, corrects and perfects skin's appearance with clinically advanced, plant-based ingredients. This silicone-free formula works to erase brown spots, blemishes, redness and fine lines while balancing uneven skin tone.

It also offers two unique ingredients: DERMAPUR HP, a special complex extracted from meadowsweet that's rich in clarifying phenolic acids, and CLARISKIN II, an agent made from wheat



germ that targets the look of discoloration with key antioxidants. Available in four shades: Light, Medium, Tan and Dark.

\$38; available at ULTA Stores nationwide, professional spas and physician offices and online via purminerals.com.

For Him

Eucalyptus & Agave 2-in-1 Collection

Comprised of a 2-in-1 Face Wash & Shave Foam and a 2-in-1 Moisturizer & Aftershave, this duo simplifies cleansing, shaving, moisturizing and soothing regimen into two quick steps. Eucalyptus oil calms skin and reduces bacteria with its natural anti-inflammatory and antibiotic properties, while agave extract promotes collagen production and locks in moisture. A host of other organic ingredients helps to reduce the appearance of fine lines, protect against environmental damage and firm skin.

Face Wash & Shave Foam, \$22, Moisturizer & Aftershave, \$28; available at johnmasters.com.

Hair Pomade

Keep hair well-coiffed with this USDA certified-organic pomade. A combination of beeswax, mango butter and essentials oils adds moisture and shine while maintaining texture and style.

\$20; available at johnmasters.com



Soothe post-summer skin

As summer's warm weather transitions into chillier fall temperatures, it's the ideal time to update your skin care and makeup with seasonally appropriate choices while soothing post-summer skin. Maintain a radiant complexion and on-trend makeup looks throughout the autumn season with product picks and tips from Dr. Hauschka Skin Care's international makeup artist, Karim Sattar.

Rejuvenating Mask ~ \$52.95

Great for all skin conditions, this mask revitalizes dull skin while reducing the appearance of pores and blemishes. Chamomile and other nurturing botanicals infuse skin with moisture and antioxidants while calming sensitivities and redness.

Karim's tip: *This is my ultimate hero skincare product. It helps to soothe redness and provide extra hydration for skin that's been in the sun. The scent also awakens your senses and leaves you feeling refreshed.*

Lipsticks ~ \$23.95

Formulated with shea butter, rose hip and carrot extract to keep lips moist and nourished, these sheer lipsticks glide on effortlessly, leaving lips velvety-smooth. Pump up the color with 16 Pink Topaz, a sheer bright pink, or fake a berry-colored stain with 15 Violet Marble.

Karim's Tip: *A truly versatile product, these lipsticks can also be used as a cream blush for a rosy pop of color.*

Liquid Eyeliner ~ \$21.95

Play up your eyes with an on-trend cat eye using this silky-smooth liquid eyeliner that glides on easily. Available in black and brown, the eyeliner is formulated with eyebright and neem extract to soothe and strengthen the sensitive eye area.

Karim's Tip: *For a thicker, more even line, start in the center of the top lash line and work your way into the inner corner. Complete the line by carefully applying the eyeliner to*

the outside corner of your eye, adding a flick for a dramatic cat eye.

For more information, visit drhauschka.com.

Get salon nails at home forever and ever



Looking to save a few bucks? How about giving up your manicure?

Unthinkable? What if you could get salon results at home with custom-fit nails that you can reuse again and again?

Custom Nail Solutions' eco-friendly kits offer up custom-fit, non-toxic and everlasting artificial nails. The nails are created using an impression system that's similar to one dentists use and results in nails that are as unique to you as your fingerprint. For us nail fashionistas, it's a beauty must-have; you can't beat custom-fit artificial nails in the length and shape you desire, which can also be decorated from the comfort of your own home. Even better, they are made of all-natural materials.

Custom Nail Solutions are safe, non-toxic and don't expose you to harmful fumes and hazardous chemicals like acrylics and gel nails do. They also do not require any filling or drilling to the natural nails. They are thinner, stronger, reusable and virtually indestructible. Because they are everlasting, you will save thousands of dollars by not having to make expensive and inconvenient nail appointments.

Getting started is easy. Order your impression kit and schedule a professional manicure the day you do your impressions. Then, follow the kit's easy DVD and booklet and send your impressions to Custom Nail Solutions headquarters. You will receive your custom-fit nails and your application and removal kit within one week. When your shipment arrives, use the convenient Custom Nail Solutions stand to apply polish/nail art to the nails, which can be removed with nail polish remover without staining the nails. The final step is to apply and admire the transformation. If you need to re-apply your nails after two to three weeks, use the kit's quick and easy soak-off process.

OK, cheaper, greener, more convenient and fun ~ how do you get yours?

First, head to Pulse's Facebook page, [facebook.com/thepulsemagazine](https://www.facebook.com/thepulsemagazine), and try your luck at winning the Custom Nail Solutions kit in our free giveaway. Or go to customnailsolutions.com or call (877) 218-7788 and order your own kit for \$139.95.

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