



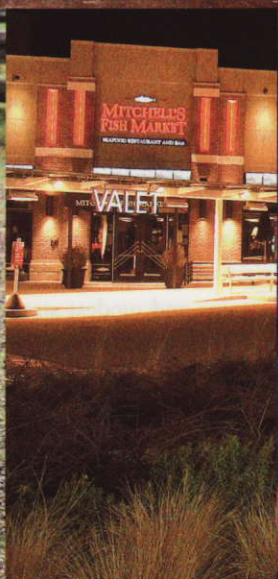
YOUR

WHETHER YOU'RE A LOCAL OR A VISITOR, ANTIQUE ENTHUSIAST OR CLOTHESHORSE,



STAM





BUSY PARENT OR SINGLE SCENESTER, READ ON AND DISCOVER...

FORD

BY JILL JOHNSON

for the DECORATOR

START ON JEFFERSON STREET, which runs along the south side of the train tracks and is dotted with eyesores like a U-Haul center. Don't let its wrong-side-of-the-tracks feel deter you, as entering the nondescript warehouses in Stamford's South End is like falling down a rabbit hole and winding up in antique collector/decorator wonderland.

At The Antique & Artisan Center, 150 dealers offer an array of period furniture, decorations, porcelain, silver, books and paintings. The range of prices won't leave the frugal shopper frustrated. Pacific Street Framing recently moved into the center, making it easy to frame purchases from the assortment of antique prints, maps and artwork for sale here.

Walk next door to Harbor View Antiques to explore a selection of fine antiques from seventy-five dealers. The feel is a bit more Greenwich estate, with prices to match, but no doubt antiques are moving about as fast as real estate these days, so make an offer.

Next, pop in the Accessory Store. This is by far the coolest lighting store I've ever visited, with new lamps and shades to suit every taste: from unique artsy designs to posh ones, plus designer pillows, candles and gifts. The Accessory Store also does repairs and rewiring and sells every kind of electrical lighting component imaginable.

A couple of blocks away is a gem called Juliska. Here you can buy European-inspired tableware and home entertaining accessories, both imaginatively designed and functional. Even if you're "just looking," it's

worth the stop. If you have kids in tow, they'll feel the same way about the new Candy Bar. Also, amid the stunning dishware, groovy glasses, linens, lamps, throw pillows and select entertaining and wedding books, is a small kids section.

Lunch time... The serious shopper, with no time to spare, can grab a bite or a caffeine pick-me-up at the J Café, right in Juliska. Enjoy quiche or a sandwich (like a yummy combo of turkey, bacon, avocado, and sprouts), soup and salads, washed down with lemonade or pomegranate oolong tea.

If you have time for a five-minute drive and a delicious lunch with a pretty harbor view, head to the Saltwater Grille. The menu features raw bar delicacies, inventive salads, burgers and grilled sandwiches, or entrees like lobster ravioli with tomato, leeks and bacon. Heavenly.

Past the junkyard on Canal Street (a modern work of art in itself), Eclipse offers hearty Northern Italian food in a pleasant setting (the outdoor seating overlooks the parking lot more than the water though). My salad special—crisp spinach, perfectly grilled shrimp, portobello mushrooms, tomatoes and gorgonzola—fed a heavily pregnant woman with some to spare.

Once your stomach is full, get an eclectic eyeful at Hidden Galleries on John Street. The 100-plus dealers here sell a diverse selection of antiques in a 47,000-square-foot treasure trove. The hodgepodge of items—porcelain, silver, carpets, artwork, lighting, furniture, architectural/garden pieces—are displayed in a pleasingly jumbled fashion.

Looking for a funkier decorating scheme? Drive a minute to Irwin Feld

Design and Mid Century Antiques. Here you can find a pumpkin-orange mod couch, red and black geometric chairs and mirrored bar items to give your home that *Ice Storm* or *Austin Powers* feel. In case the husbands are along, there is a Harley-Davidson store right next door.

If you happen to be out on a Friday, Saturday or Sunday, stop by the Loft Artists Association at the end of Canal Street. A small gallery features photography, mixed media and collages in the \$50 to \$900 range. Or better yet, attend the Fall Open Studios from November 6 to 8, explore the lofts, meet the artists and observe them at work (Friday 6 to 9 p.m., Saturday and Sunday 11 to 5 p.m.).

Not in the South End but not to be missed is United House Wrecking. Advertised as "Connecticut's largest antiques store," this 2.5 acre indoor/outdoor antiques extravaganza is the place to find towering Pinocchios, giant giraffes, \$3,500 moose heads and practical stuff too: furniture for every room (antique, reproductions and some new styles), upholstery, design services, plus lots of patio furniture, fountains and modest statues for the garden that may be overwhelmed by hulking toy soldiers and the like. »



LOCAL FAVORITES

ACCESSORY STORE
69 Jefferson Street
203-327-7128
stamfordshades.com
MON-SAT 10:30 to 5:30
SUN 12 to 5

ANTIQUÉ & ARTISAN CENTER
69 Jefferson Street
203-327-6022
stamfordantiques.com
MON-SAT 10:30 to 5:30
SUN 12 to 5

ECLISSE RESTAURANT
700 Canal Street
203-325-3773
eclissestamford.com

HARBOR VIEW ANTIQUES
101 Jefferson Street
203-325-8070
harborviewantiques.com
MON-SAT 10:30 to 5:30, SUN 12 to 5

HIDDEN GALLERIES
47 John Street
203-363-0003
hidengalleries.net
MON-SAT 10:30 to 5:30
SUN 11 to 5:30

IRWIN FELD DESIGN & MID CENTURY ANTIQUES
583 Pacific Street
203-588-0567/845-304-8872
irwinfelddesign.com/
midcenturyantiques.com
TUES-FRI 10 to 6
SAT 12 to 5



A decorator's dream: The
Antique & Artisan Center
is home to 150 dealers.

PHOTOGRAPH BY JOHN BESSLER

JULISKA STORE & J CAFÉ

465 Canal Street
203-316-9118
juliska.com
MON-SAT 9 to 5 (CAFÉ 11 to 4)
SUN 12 to 5 (CAFÉ 12 to 4)

LOFT ARTISTS ASSOCIATION

845 Canal Street
203-323-4153
loftartists.com
FRI, SAT, SUN 12 to 5 (or by appointment)

SALTWATER GRILLE

183 Harbor Drive
203-391-6500
saltwatergrille.net

UNITED HOUSE WRECKING

535 Hope Street
203-348-5371
unitedhousewrecking.com
MON-SAT 9:30 to 5:30
SUN 12 to 5

for the FASHIONISTA

TWO YEARS AGO THE MALL in Stamford was transformed from a ghost town into the thriving heart of downtown. The Stamford Town Center is now the obvious first stop for the shopping enthusiast. She (or he) may not need to look further than its 100-plus stores. Aside from the big department stores—Saks, Macy's and designer stores like Coach and Fendi—this mall has affordable but stylish options like Zara (Spain's Prada knockoff specialist), H&M (a Swedish casual clothing store where models in Europe have been shopping since before today's posers were even born) and a 25,000-square-foot flagship Forever 21 (where one chic friend swears you can find a fabulous night-out dress for \$20). Lord & Taylor also is nearby and has been freshened up to offer much more than your mother's cashmere sweaters.

The mall's Barnes and Noble store is a great rest stop between fashion sprees (or a good place to send the husband and kids when they get bored). Encompassing two levels and 40,000 square feet, it is the largest B & N in the state. To zone out, choose from 200,000 music titles in the store's state-of-the-art listening stations. The mall also has an Apple Store for the technologically inclined and a Looney Tunes play area for energetic tykes.

Lunch is easy. Check out the cool enclave of eateries situated at the entrance to the mall. If you go to P. F. Chang's, its famous lettuce wraps are a must. California Pizza Kitchen is a good choice for kids, and the Capital Grille appeals to steak-eating businessmen.

For unique, affordable accessories to complement your new wardrobe, head to Agabhumi on Magee Avenue. This store offers "The Best of Bali" in the form of vibrant jewelry, handbags, belts, shoes and a small selection of sportswear and dresses. Most items are suited to those with a Bohemian bent—tie-dyed hobo bags (\$18), beaded sandals, turquoise and shell jewelry—but there are John Hardy-esque bracelets (\$98 to \$198) and faux-snakeskin grommet bags (\$68) to fool your Palm Beach friends. Purchase any of Agabhumi's rose quartz and freshwater pearl jewelry and 30 percent goes to the Bennett Cancer Center.

If you prefer to accessorize with precious gems, Stamford boasts several exquisite jewelry stores. Nagi's certified watchmakers, gemologists and master jewelers can custom-make pieces from fine imported jewels, or seek out rare collector's series watches. The store carries various brands such as David Yurman, H. Stern and Zenith; and check out the Kwiat diamonds (as worn by Natalie Portman at the Academy Awards). Jose Grant, known for elegant and intriguing puzzle rings, sells a unique line of jewelry and also employs craftsmen who can create one-of-a-kind pieces. A consignment gallery offers shoppers another source of special finds, both old and new.

Last but not least, need a great pair of jeans? You don't need to trek to Manhattan to find them. All your denim whims can be fulfilled a mere ten minutes north of downtown Stamford. Said to be a favorite of R&B superstar Rihanna, Havana Jeans has every type and size of designer jean, from 7 For All Mankind to Citizens of Humanity, DL1961 to "Rips" (the coveted beat-up jeans that cost the most of all these pricey pants, at \$200-plus). Tween jeans start at \$45, but teens/adults are likely to pay three times that. If you're shopping with your daughter, be understanding. Remember those battles with mom over the cost of a pair of Jordache?

Time to wind down. Across the street from Havana Jeans, find a chic oasis that will make you forget you're anywhere near a strip mall. Get pampered at the Noëlle Spa with a massage, body scrub, manicure/pedicure and/or have your hair and makeup done before a night on the town. If you've already sprung for your daughter's \$150 jeans, why not throw in a \$100 teen massage? Noëlle has a men's spa as well, or for the spa-shy male, drop him off at Montana's for Men downtown. Here he can get a haircut or color, old-fashioned shave, manicure/pedicure and shoe shine, while watching sporting events/stock market updates on six televisions with a cup of joe or cold beer in hand. »



LOCAL FAVORITES

AGABHUMI
22 Magee Street
888-242-2254
agabhumi.com
MON—FRI 10 to 6
SAT 11 to 5
SUN 12 to 5

HAVANA JEANS
1061 High Ridge Road
203-968-1757
MON—WED, FRI, SAT 10 to 6
THURS 10 to 7
SUN 11 to 6

JOSE GRANT
3000 Summer Street
203-327-4055
josegrant.com
MON—FRI 10 to 6
SAT 10 to 5

LORD & TAYLOR
110 High Ridge Road
203-327-6600
lordandtaylor.com
MON—FRI 10 to 9:30
SAT 10 to 8
SUN 11 to 7

MONTANA FOR MEN
1 Bank Street
203-964-1234
montanaformen.com
TUES—THURS 11 to 7
FRI 10 to 6
SAT 9 to 6

NAGI JEWELERS
828 High Ridge Road
203-964-0551
nagis.net
MON—FRI 10 to 6
SAT 10 to 5

**NOËLLE SPA
FOR BEAUTY & WELLNESS**
1100 High Ridge Road
203-322-3445
Noelle.com
MON, WED 9 to 5:30
TUES, THURS, FRI 8 to 8
SAT 8 to 6

STAMFORD TOWN CENTER
100 Greyrock Place
203-324-0935
stamfordtowncenter.com
MON—SAT 10 to 9
SUN 11 to 6



PHOTOGRAPH BY JOHN BESSLER

Lord & Taylor has long been known for its shoe oasis. **Inset:** Havana Jeans is the go-to spot for all things denim.



for the **WHOLE FAMILY**



Top: Kids U offers a world of indoor fun. **Below:** Lakeside Pottery can bring out the sculptor in every child.

FROM OUTINGS IN its dense forests to excursions on a schooner along its coast, Stamford offers a vast array of fun and educational activities for kids and families.

The Stamford Museum and Nature Center makes for an excellent morning or full day-out. Even the little ones can manage a stroll past the Otter Pond, through the Heckscher Farm (a quiet working farm with dozens of animals, a barn built in 1750 and a maple sugar house), into the Animal Embassy (where children can learn about and even interact with exotic snakes, lizards, frogs and birds), and then over to the unique playground built to blend in with the bucolic surroundings. Pack lunch and eat at the picnic tables if the weather is nice. The energetic can explore eighty acres of trails after lunch; history buffs should tour the Bendel Mansion Museum (brainchild of department store giant Henri Bendel). The grounds also include an observatory (Fridays, 8 to 10 p.m.) and planetarium (second Sunday of each month at 3 p.m.).

Just down the road, Bartlett Arboretum and Gardens offers ninety-one more acres to explore. My 3-year-olds were thrilled to hear we were going to see “trees” and gamely roamed through the gardens and peaceful forest trails. If my 6-year-old had been along, his attention span for

maples and magnolias may have been a tad shorter. For a more interactive experience, visitors can take educational guided walks and refer to the website for special family events and children’s programs.

If it’s too cold for hiking, an ice skating outing is great fun for the whole family. Stamford’s Twin Rinks has two indoor NHL regulation-size rinks and offers public skating daily (usually mid-morning to early afternoon). A Friday night evening session, from 8 to 10 p.m., is a cool option for teens (and adults, who can grab a drink at the bar upstairs between spins). The complex also includes two restaurants, several party rooms, a sports shop, New York Sports Club and a dance academy.

Two more indoor options are Kids U (which has a 2,000-square-foot indoor jungle gym) and Lakeside Pottery. Access to the Kids U “PlayQuad” is restricted to children who are enrolled in one of Kids U’s classes (and their guests), so this isn’t a tourist option. However, locals with one- to nine-year-olds should check it out. My kids love it. Lakeside Pottery offers after-school classes and a summer camp for the eight-plus crowd. This is the real deal—with clay and glazing—not a modern paint-your-own pottery place. Private lessons can be arranged for children, and parents can give the wheel a whirl too. »



LOCAL FAVORITES

BARTLETT ARBORETUM & GARDENS

151 Brookdale Road
203-322-6971
bartlettarboretum.org
DAILY 8:30 to sunset
Adults \$6, Kids (UNDER 12), Free
WED Free for all

KIDS U

633 Hope Street
203-358-9500
kidsu.com

MON.-WED. 9 TO 6;
THURS. 9 TO 5; FRI. 9 TO 1:30

LAKESIDE POTTERY

543 Newfield Avenue
203-323-2222
lakesidepottery.com

STAMFORD MUSEUM & NATURE CENTER

39 Scofieldtown Road
203-322-0408
stamfordmuseum.org

BENDEL MANSION & GALLERIES:

MON-SAT 9 TO 5, SUN 11 TO 5

HECKSCHER FARM:

DAILY 9 TO 5 (NOV-MAR 9 TO 4)

ANIMAL EMBASSY:

TUES-SUN 10 TO 2

NATURE'S PLAYGROUND:

DAILY 9 TO 5 (weather permitting)
Adults \$8, Kids (4 - 17) \$6,
Kids (3 and under) Free

TWIN RINKS

1063 Hope Street
203-968-9000
stamfordtwinrinks.com
Public skating DAILY—CHECK WEB SITE
Over 6, \$8, Under 6, \$6,
FRI NIGHT, \$9, Skate rental, \$4



PHOTOGRAPH BY JOHN BESSLER

Kids can get up close and personal with all sorts of animals at the Stamford Museum and Nature Center's working farm.

for the NIGHT OWL

YOUR NIGHT CAN START early in Stamford because bars begin to buzz with the loosening of ties at 5 p.m. The lawyers, financiers and advertising execs who work at Stamford Landing filter out of their offices and into the Crab Shell and Paradise Bar & Grille—two top happy-hour picks on the marina.

Downtown, on and around Bedford Street is another hot zone, especially when the weather cools down. The area has a collegiate feel, minus the underage crowd. Tigin Irish Pub & Restaurant, with its Irish-antique décor and cheery staff, is a great place for a pint of Guinness and game of darts or a casual meal. Though bangers and mash is a more fitting choice, Tigin's signature potato pancake quesadilla is out of this world. Take it up a notch with a wine-tasting event or dinner at Napa (listed in Zagat's Top 100 American Restaurants last year). Also nearby are Kotobuki, a longtime locals' favorite for sushi, and Coromandel for Indian food.

For a see-and-be-seen singles' scene, hit BUTterfield 8 where a DJ spins nightly for the pretty young things who stream in past the slick bouncers. The modern wood interior is attractive and a few chandeliers add a touch of that Spy Bar feel (a place that is probably as familiar to the young folk here as the old Rick Springfield

tune the DJ must have played just for me).

The newest hot spot in town is 84 Park. The man behind this boutique nightclub is Matthew Bongiovi, who started his career in entertainment as tour manager for his brother, Jon Bon Jovi. Bongiovi was aiming for an upscale New York/South Beach feel, and the club's design is reminiscent of Miami's Mynt. The *New York Times* named his first club, Elements (now a chic steakhouse/lounge), a Jersey Shore hot spot. People go there to feel like they're in Manhattan. Likewise, 84 Park gives discriminating club-goers that Meatpacking District aura with no commute.

For a more cultural evening, the Avon Theatre Film Center is not your average cinema. Built in 1939, the Avon was fully restored to its original splendor in 2004. The neocolonial façade and Art Deco marquee hearken back to the era of pictures like *It's a Wonderful Life*—the first movie to play here. Now a not-for-profit art house cinema, the Avon shows independent and foreign films, documentaries and Hollywood classics.

If you want to go more highbrow, the Stamford Symphony has concerts scheduled on October 3 and 4 and also November 14 and 15. They play downtown at the Stamford Center for the Arts, aka The Palace. This venue also features plays, musicals, comedians, dance performances and opera. Check the website for upcoming events. **S**

LOCAL FAVORITES

**AVON THEATRE
FILM CENTER**
272 Bedford Street
203-967-3660
avontheatre.org

BUTTERFIELD 8
112 Bedford Street
203-504-8123
Butterfield8stamford.com

COROMANDEL
68 Broad Street
203-964-1010
coromandelcuisine.com

CRAB SHELL
46 Southfield Avenue
203-967-7229
crabshell.com

KOTOBUKI
457 Summer Street
203-359-4747
kotobukijapaneserestaurant.com

NAPA & CO.
75 Broad Street
203-353-3319
napaandcompany.com

PARADISE BAR & GRILL
78 Southfield Avenue
203-323-1116
paradisebarandgrill.com

84 PARK
84 West Park Place
203-973-0300
84park.com

**STAMFORD CENTER
FOR THE ARTS**
307 Atlantic Street
203-358-2305
stamfordcenterforthearts.org

**TIGIN IRISH PUB
& RESTAURANT**
175 Bedford Street
203-353-8444
tiginirishpub.com

The Children's School

You have the capacity for anything. Yes, you are a marvel.

—Pablo Casals

A school for ages 3 through 8.

The Children's School
118 Scofieldtown Road
Stamford, CT 06903
tcs@childrensschool.org
203 329 8815
www.childrensschool.org

AGABHUMI THE BEST OF BALI



22 Magee Ave., Stamford, CT
203-325-2274 • toll free: 888-242-2254
www.agabhumi.com

Locations in Stamford, Santa Monica, CA, Barbados, WI and, in October, Westport, CT.



The iconic art-deco Avon Theatre gained new life as a not-for-profit art house. **Inset top:** 84 park is a welcome addition to downtown nightlife. **Inset bottom:** The Palace Theatre is a cultural hub for Stamford.