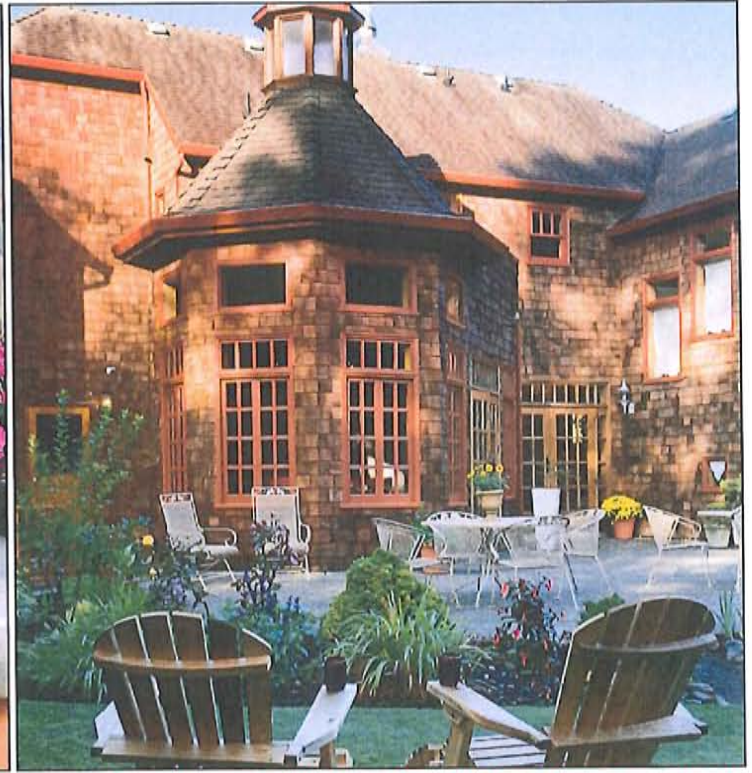


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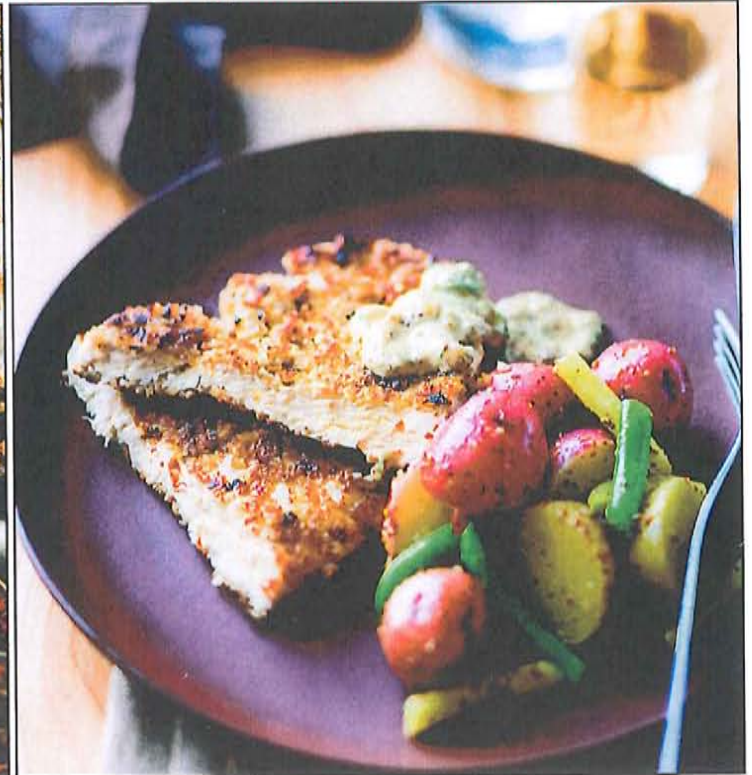
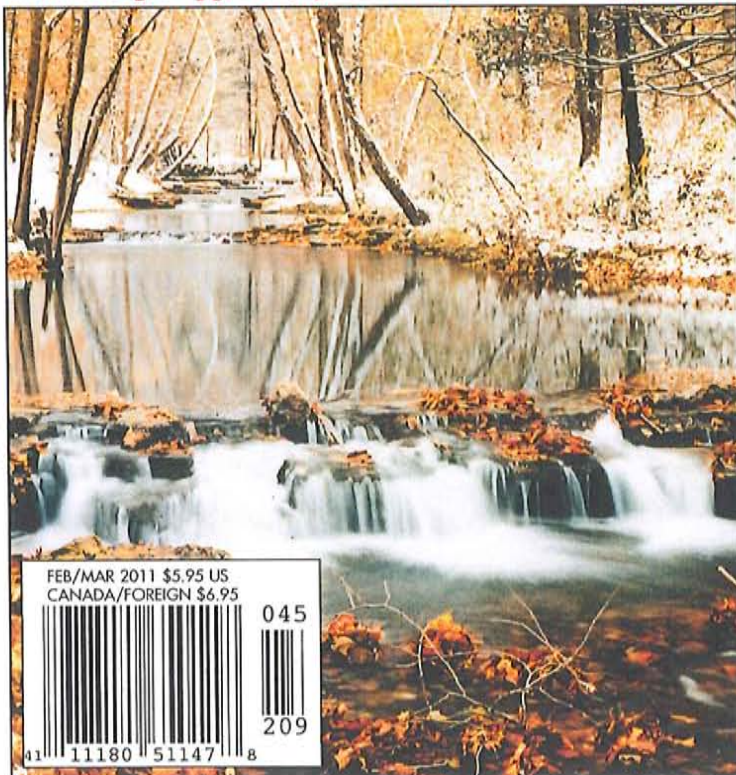
# AMERICAN LIFESTYLE

THE MAGAZINE CELEBRATING LIFE IN AMERICA

FEBRUARY/MARCH 2011



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# COLD HANDS, WARM TOWN

## THE LAMBERTVILLE-NEW HOPE WINTER FESTIVAL

Article by Andie Orgain. Photography courtesy of Andrew Ryan

With the weather outside reported to be the coldest temperatures we've seen in the mid Atlantic region all winter, I had my reservations about the outcome of this weekend getaway. An ever-approaching snow storm was forecasted to hit our hometown and follow us along the winding river roads to Lambertville, New Jersey, as we made our way to the area's Winter Festival with an itinerary chock full of outdoor excursions. I half expected the entire festival to be postponed until fairer weather arrived. But no sooner did we step foot into town were my fears laid to rest—the community was already ablaze with commotion, in complete disregard to Mother Nature's fury.

Since the late nineties, the town of Lambertville, along side its Pennsylvania neighbor, have hosted the annual Winter Festival. What began as a way to rejuvenate two communities with a breath of economic life during the late winter weeks has since grown into a large spectacle where people of all ages and backgrounds come together in

celebration of the beautiful frosty season. Activities spread across the two sister towns of Lambertville and New Hope, which straddle the east and west banks of the Delaware River respectfully, blurring the lines of where one state ends and the other begins. A brief walk across the connecting bridge has crowds of people meandering from New Jersey to Pennsylvania and back again to take in all the excitement.

A vibrant parade launched Saturday's attractions into motion, and set the dynamic pace for the Winter Festival. The beat of the live music from the marching bands led the community on a mile-long promenade. Local businesses, school groups, and public figures alike danced lively through the streets following their creative renditions of a float, handing out candies and other goodies as they passed by. We, along with the packs of people lining the streets, braved the frigid temperatures to witness this over-the-top procession.

As the crowd began to dissipate into the warm surrounding

buildings, my travel companion and I remained in the chilly winter air to sightsee. The small-town charm felt delightfully different from the high-paced city bustle to which I was accustomed, and we walked up and down every street, making certain not to miss an inch of this sophisticated, yet surprisingly casual world. This once industrial area now boasts a flourishing identity deeply rooted in the arts, theater, and antiques, with the most fantastic shops and galleries brimming from every nook and cranny. The smell of restaurant delicacies wafting through the brisk air teased our senses while we lingered at the window fronts.

Sightseeing led us to the doorstep of the Marshall House, which upon entering we learned was once the boyhood home of James Wilson Marshall who discovered gold in California. Enchanted with the lengthy history and antique furniture that we found within the modest brick home, we also strolled through the nearby Parry Mansion, an eighteenth century Georgian-style structure that was originally





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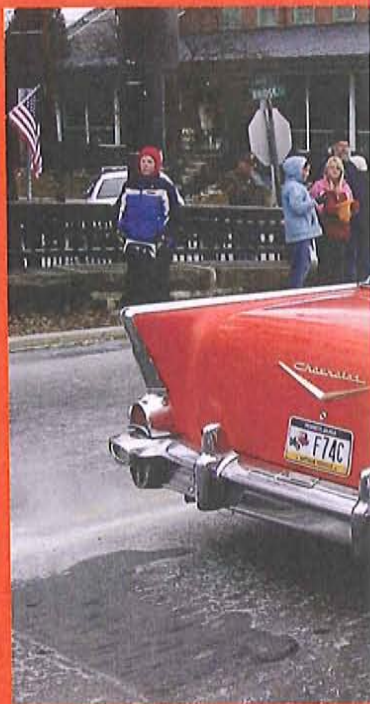


A vibrant parade launched **SATURDAY'S ATTRACTIONS** into motion, and set the **DYNAMIC PACE** for the Winter Festival."

the home of the "father of New Hope," Benjamin Parry. Built in 1784, the mansion remained occupied by four generations of Parry's direct descendants until 1966 when it was sold to the New Hope Historical Society. The building has since opened its doors to the public where visitors can tour the home's eight rooms, adorned with traditional antique furnishings, each space reflecting a different time period of the family's occupation.

Exploring the town left us famished, so we rejoined the masses at the Triumph Brewing Company restaurant for the festival's Beef 'N' Brew event, sponsored by the local Rotary Club. This celebratory destination transcended all expectations. Not only did the roast beef melt in your mouth and pair superbly with their complementary beverages, but the entire industrial space of the restaurant was warm with friendship, truly and entirely exemplifying the spirit of the festival. This event did in fact bring people together—couples interacted with their dining companions, old friends mingled with long lost acquaintances, and even conversations among strangers came together effortlessly. At our table alone, we met a handful of gregarious people, sharing life stories and lessons learned and even staying long after the program ended to get better acquainted with new friends.

Alas, the afternoon adventures drew to a close, and we returned to our inn with full stomachs and slightly achy feet. We booked a guest room in one of the many romantic hideaways the towns offer: the Inn at Lambertville Station, which was a beautiful mix of old-time charm with



royal accommodations, and was the perfect location for some much needed rest and relaxation. Our first floor suite had a picturesque view of the river banks, and the tall soaking tub and lavender bath salts made the space that much more heavenly. We basked in the peace and quiet for as long as we could.

Although daylight eventually disappeared into the horizon for the night, we were just getting our second wind, and headed to the Harlans Cabaret room at The Nevermore Hotel where the evening festivities were already in full swing. The event began with a wine and hors d'oeuvres reception, giving us the honor of rubbing elbows with several of the leading pioneers behind the Lambertville-New Hope Winter Festival. Local resident Ms. Lindsey Meredith Buffa was on the entertainment bill for the night, and took center stage as we were finishing up our five-star, three-course dinner. Belted out popular show tunes and other well-known standards, she

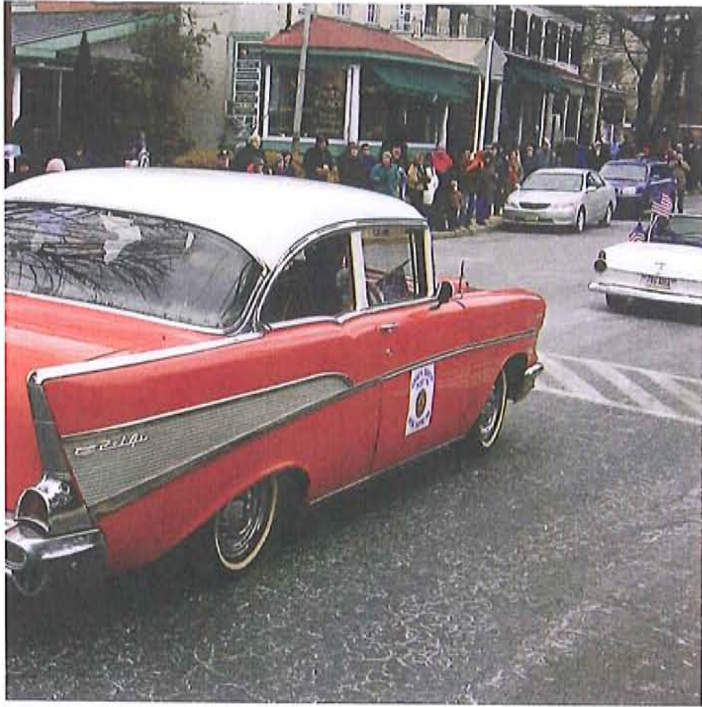
enchanted the entire room with her Sirens-like voice. The show was absolutely unbelievable, and we retired back to our suite humming Broadway songs the entire way.

The harmonious coos of Canadian Geese lured us out of the lush linen bed the next morning. Drawing the curtains of our panoramic bedroom window to let in the vibrant sunlight revealed flocks of geese and ducks swimming in the icy water below. Our continental breakfast arrived shortly after, hand-delivered to the door by a gracious staff member. Snuggling back under the covers, we enjoyed the warm, homemade muffins and steaming coffee in the comforts of our bed. I was tempted to stay inside the inn to enjoy this divine pampering all day long. But there was more to be done before the Winter Festival was over, and we were quickly on our way again.

We trekked along the main street to the New Hope high school where volunteers were already

kicking the festivities off to a good start. Along with serving a pancake breakfast and corralling kids into an obstacle course playland, the committee also held a Snow Folk Art Exhibition. Reflective of the artistic background of the river towns, this contest invited local artists and amateurs to transform a life-size snowman cutout into a work of art. Each snowman structure sported its own unique theme, resembling the traditional snowman, a historical or well-known figure, or an imaginative free form all its own. We'd spotted a bunch of these snowmen structures being proudly displayed outside of many local businesses throughout New Hope and Lambertville, but little compared to the mass of creativity exuding from these colorfully decorated characters lining up and down the hallways.

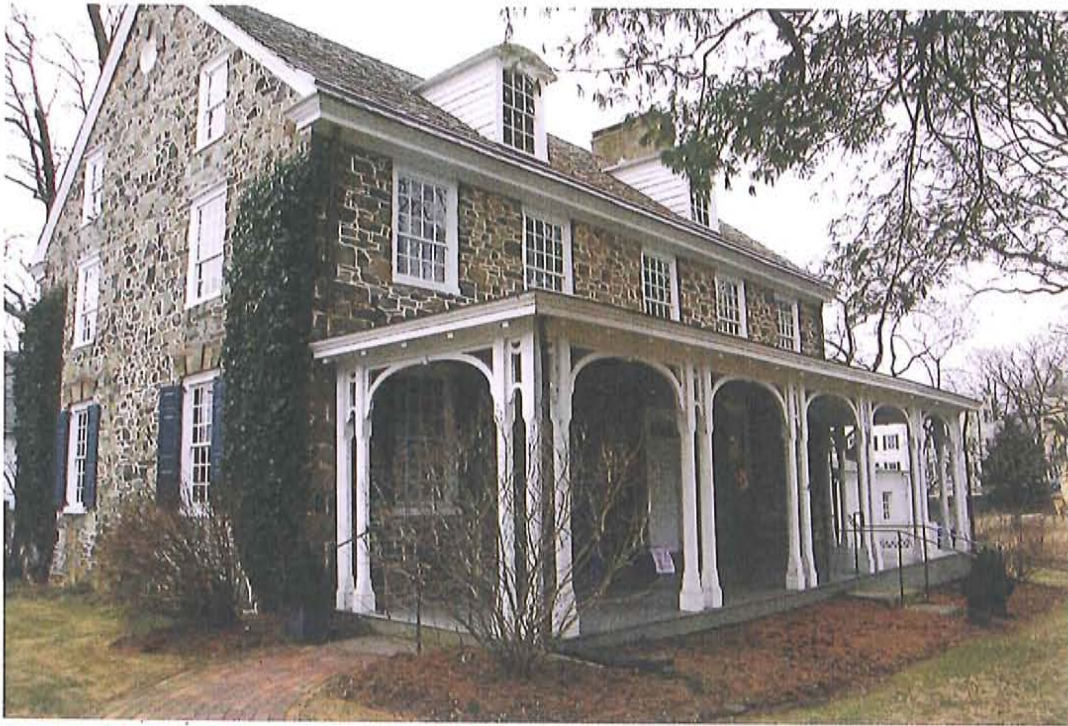
Sunday's events continued in the same fashion as the day before—with so many activities to see, and not enough time to do them all. We contemplated

participating in the Winter Festival Photo Tour, where professional photographer Anthony Flamio led a small group of amateurs armed with cameras and tripods along a guided trip to shoot the icy falls spilling over the canal. But we ultimately decided to take the Music Mountain Hike instead. This forty-five minute trail gave us the flexibility to take our time as we viewed the winter landscape of the town and valley below, and any opportunity to leisurely explore the serene flora and fauna of this area was well worth a self-directed expedition in the cold.

To mark the end of this year's Winter Festival, people swarmed to Union Square Drive for the annual Chili Cook-off. As the main attraction of the day, and perhaps even the hottest event of the entire weekend, the Chili Cook-off generated a lot of attention around town, with people struggling to land last-minute tickets to this sold-out showdown. The fiery competition challenged thirteen local restaurants to create their tastiest, most tantalizing chili recipes to see who will reign supreme. Every person lucky enough to attend this event was granted three votes to nominate their top choices for best recipe. When the enticing taste-testing was finally complete, a trophy presentation was held, and a winner was crowned the prestigious honor of chili champion.

After bidding adieu to our new friends, we left the gracious communities that hosted our weekend stay. We vowed to return the following year, when the weather once again becomes unbearably cold, and we are in need of some neighborly love to warm our hearts and cure our winter blues. [AL]



Built in 1784, the mansion remained occupied by **FOUR GENERATIONS** of Parry's **DIRECT DESCENDANTS** until 1966 when it was sold to the New Hope Historical Society."