

# GREAT DATES

By *Amy Starensier Lee*

**With Valentine's Day bearing down, the pressure's on to show that special someone that you care enough to plan the very best. Here's a baker's dozen of dating ideas guaranteed to help you make out like a winner.**

Whoever said, "It's the thought that counts," was obviously trying to make up for having failed to impress a prospective or current loved one. Showing up on Valentine's Day with a bouquet of Stop & Shop flowers or a sampler of Whitman's chocolates—clear indications that the bearer is banking on the aforementioned adage—is not the most direct route to your beloved's heart. And though tried and true, dinner and a movie just doesn't deliver the goods like it used to. So whether you're trying to turn up the heat on a new romance, rekindle an old, or keep the home fires burning, here are some suggestions that show him or her that you've not only taken the time to think of something new and different but that you know how to put the extra in the ordinary.

## Aww, Shucks



OK, so it's not very subtle, but starting your evening at an oyster bar certainly sends a definite message. Oysters have been linked with love since Aphrodite, the Greek goddess of love, sprang forth from the sea on an oyster shell. Casanova was said to have started each meal with several dozen oysters, and we all know what his dating life looked like. While Max's Oyster Bar can't promise mythic results, you will get a great meal—the rest will be up to you. Don't miss the daily Buck-a-Shuck special from 4 to 6 p.m., when the featured bivalve variety can be had for \$1 each. *964 Farmington Ave., West Hartford, 860-236- 6299, [www.maxrestaurantgroup.com](http://www.maxrestaurantgroup.com).*