

MERRIMACK REPERTORY THEATRE

2014-15 SEASON

PLAYGUIDE



MEET THE PLAYWRIGHT

Leslie Ayvazian
on marriage,
Shakespeare, and the
mystique of nature.

THE POCONO MOUNTAINS

Pennsylvania's hot
spot for love in the
woods.

THE KISS

Who knew how much
history there was?

WHAT'S IN A GNOME:

The big scoop on the
little man on the lawn.

MARCH 19 – APRIL 12, 2015

OUT ^{OF} THE CITY

by Leslie Ayvazian

Charles Towers, Artistic Director



Elizabeth Kegley, Executive Director

Jim Waldo & Susan Mitchell, Honorary Producers

MARCH 19 - APRIL 12, 2015

OUT OF THE CITY

by Leslie Ayvazian

Featuring

KEN LAND
CHARLOTTE MAIER

KATE LEVY
GRANT SHAUD

Scenic Designer

LAUREN HELPERN

Costume Designer

JESSICA WEGENER SHAY

Lighting Designer

BRIAN J. LILIENTHAL

Sound Designer

DAVID REMEDIOS

Casting Director

KELLIE GILLESPIE

Stage Manager

CASEY LEIGH HAGWOOD

Assistant Stage Manager

PETER CREWE

Directed by

CHRISTIAN PARKER

2014-15 Season Sponsor

sage bank 
sagebank.com

The Telegraph
It's Your Community.

MEDIA SPONSOR

EDUCATIONAL AND COMMUNITY OUTREACH PROGRAM SUPPORTERS

3M
Aubert J. Fay Charitable Fund
Trustees of the Ayer Home
Bobs Discount Furniture
Ted & Connie Lapre Fund

Lowell Polish Cultural Council
Linda Trudel Endowment Fund
Ronald M. Ansin Foundation
Nathaniel & Elizabeth P. Stevens Foundation
Top of the Hill Fund



This program is supported in parts by grants from the Lowell, Lawrence, Burlington, Chelmsford, and Dracut Cultural Councils, local agencies which are supported by the Massachusetts Cultural Council, a state agency. Supported in part by an award from the National Endowment for the Arts. Art Works.



TABLE OF CONTENTS

PLAYGUIDE

| | |
|--|----|
| The Cast of <i>Out of the City</i> | 4 |
| Q&A with Leslie Ayvazian..... | 5 |
| Passion in the Poconos | 7 |
| Don't Know Much About Kiss-tory..... | 8 |
| Romantic Chemistry | 9 |
| Superior Charcoal | 10 |
| What's in a Gnome? | 12 |
| Shakespearean Shenanigans | 13 |
| Discussion Questions | 14 |
| Further Reading..... | 14 |
| Thank You..... | 14 |

THE CAST OF OUT OF THE CITY



KEN LAND (Dan) **MRT:** Debut.
BROADWAY: *Promises, Promises, The Scarlet Pimpernel, Victor/Victoria, How The Grinch Stole Christmas.* **OFF-BROADWAY/NEW YORK:** *Little Shop of Horrors, The Gig, The Death of Von Richthofen.* **NATIONAL TOURS:** *Legally Blonde, The Scarlet Pimpernel, Secret Garden, Sweet Charity, Evita.* **REGIONAL:** *Legally Blonde, Singin' In*

The Rain, Phantom, Pittsburgh CLO; A Feminine Ending, Portland Center Stage; Pig Farm, Old Globe; Sex, Sex, Sex, Sex, Sex, and Sex, Matrix Theatre; Romeo and Juliet, Goodspeed. **FILM/TELEVISION:** *The Good Wife, Boston Legal, Law & Order(s), Six Feet Under, Judging Amy, The District, Crossing Jordan, Star Trek: Voyager, Malcom in the Middle, Strong Medicine.*



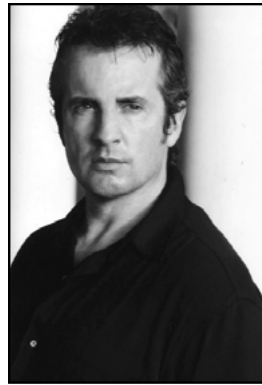
KATE LEVY (Jill) **MRT:** Debut.
BROADWAY NATIONAL TOURS: *On Golden Pond* (with Michael Learned and Tom Bosley); *The Graduate.* **New York:** *Stalking the Bogeyman, New World Stages; The Memorandum, The Actors Co.; The Return of the Prodigal, Soldier's Wife, The Mint; Halfway Home, The New Group.* **REGIONAL:** *The Other Place, Hartford Theatreworks/Rep of St. Louis (CT Critics Circle Award); Snow Falling on Cedars, Hartford Stage; Well,*

Denver Center; A Sleeping Country, Cincinnati Playhouse; The Goat, Arena Stage; Outrage, Portland Center Stage; On Golden Pond, Cleveland Playhouse; Uncle Vanya, Denver Center; Present Laughter, Pioneer Theatre Company; Heaven, Yale Rep; Dinner With Friends, Alliance; The Real Thing, Alley Theatre. Also: Barrow St. Theater, MTC, Roundabout, The O'Neill Theatre Ctr., Northern Stage, Florida Stage, Syracuse Stage, Indiana Rep, Clarence Brown, Philadelphia Festival for New Plays, BoarsHead. **TELEVISION:** *Elementary, Law and Order: SVU, Blue Bloods, Unforgettable, A Gifted Man, Royal Pains, The Good Wife, Law and Order: Criminal Intent, Gossip Girl, Onion News Network, Law and Order.* **FILM:** *Extremely Loud and Incredibly Close, The Origins of War.* **EDUCATION:** BA, Tufts University; MFA, American Conservatory Theatre.



CHARLOTTE MAIER (Carol) **MRT:** Debut. **BROADWAY:** *Act One; The Columnist; God of Carnage; Inherit the Wind; Losing Louie; Dinner at Eight; A Delicate Balance; Abe Lincoln in Illinois; Picnic; Arsenic and Old Lace.* **OFF-BROADWAY:** *By The Water (MTC) Witnessed by the World (59E59) The Last Yankee (MTC); Balm in Gilead (Circle Rep).* **REGIONAL:** *Suddenly Last Summer (Westport County Playhouse); The Father and Night of the Iguana*

(Berkshire Theatre Festival); Book of the Night (Goodman). **FILM:** *Two Weeks Notice; Steve Martin's The Pink Panther; Music and Lyrics.* **TELEVISION:** *Elementary; Person of Interest; Boardwalk Empire; Sondheim Celebration at Carnegie Hall.*



GRANT SHAUD (Matt) **MRT:** Debut.
BROADWAY: *Relatively Speaking* (Three plays by Woody Allen, Elaine May & Ethan Coen); *Torch Song Trilogy* (Harvey Fierstein). **OFF BROADWAY/NEW YORK:** *Writers Block* (Woody Allen), Atlantic Theater Company; *The Starry Messenger* (Kenneth Lonergan), The New Group; *Four Dogs and a Bone* (John Patrick Shanley), Manhattan Theatre Club; *After*

Ashley (Gia Gianfriddo), Vineyard Theatre; *The Favor* (Leslie Ayvazian), The Ensemble Studio Theatre. **REGIONAL:** *Laughing Wild*, (Christopher Durang), Tiffany Theatre, Los Angeles; *Out*, Philadelphia Theatre Company. **FILM:** *The Distinguished Gentlemen.* **TELEVISION:** *Murphy Brown*; series regular on: *Oliver Beene*, Fox; *Madigan Men* with Gabriel Byrne; *From the Earth to the Moon*, HBO; and various guest appearances. **EDUCATION:** member of the Ensemble Studio Theatre (NYC)



Q&A WITH LESLIE AYVAZIAN

Leslie Ayvazian is a New York-based playwright and actress. Her other works include *Nine Armenians* and *Rosemary and I*. She has performed numerous roles on Broadway, and also performed as Carol in the world premiere of *Out of the City* at the Dorset Theatre Festival in Dorset, Vermont.

How long have you been writing? Do you remember a particular first project that was exciting to you?

I went to high school in Saranac Lake, New York. They didn't have a large arts program; there wasn't much art in the Adirondacks then. And so one of the things I did, just to be entertaining, was to write skits, and satires, and little plays that were put on in the school assembly. There wasn't much else going on there, so they gave me time, and I used my classmates. It started there, where I would direct and write and act in things in my high school. I didn't think it was anything that I was particularly good at, it was just something that I liked doing.

Then, when I graduated, I became an actor. But I've always been writing. When I was about 42 or 43 years old and I had a young child, I didn't want to leave him as much as I had to in order to maintain an acting career in the city. I decided to step away from that and try to write a play. I wrote *Nine Armenians*, and it did very well.

So I jumped into writing full time.

What about writing plays, specifically, is exciting to you?

You know, it's funny what draws you to whatever it is you choose to write.

For me, I just find the experience of being in the theatre for a play a unique experience. It's different than going to the movies, and it's different than doing anything else. There's a collective feeling, and a trust that happens when something's live onstage.

I personally really enjoy dialogue. I love watching relationships. I love the difficult experience of creating something in which we're introduced to the characters, things get complicated, there's a confrontation, and then things resolve. The process

of doing that in about a two-hour period is a complicated thing to do. And to be able to reflect life in this real-life way is an interesting challenge to me.

Right now, for the very first time, I'm actually writing a book. I've never done that before. But I know that having written all these plays, and spending time around all these people who are writing plays, is aiding and determining a lot of the voice of this book.

Tell me about the idea for *Out of the City*.

It actually happened while I was standing backstage, waiting to go on in a play. I had the idea of two women, who'd been friends for a very long time, suddenly sharing a kiss.

It didn't mean that now, suddenly, there are two lesbians. It wasn't that. It could have been that, but it wasn't that. It was just, after these years and years of friendship, what happens if you look at each other, and you share this very soft, very pretty kiss? And what if one of you is older, and life hasn't felt this sparkly for a while? What would that do?

The thing that interests me about plays is how things shift just a little bit. That's the thing I pursue all the time. What that little shift does, and the little tilt that it does to the paradigm of a marriage—a solid marriage, a good marriage—to me was worth investigating.

When I first wrote it, it was a one-act, which eventually became the first scene. I made the play full length because... well, people liked it, and everyone wanted to know who the husbands were.

It took a long time for me to figure out who the husbands were. A one-act is a complete thing. When you build a full length on it, it's like building a house on top of an apartment: you already have something that works. So, investigating who the husbands were, and how they fit in, took a lot of work. But I pursued it all on the same thing: that everything pivots on a kiss.



Charlotte Maier, Ken Land, Grant Shaud, Kate Levy.
Photo by Meghan Moore.



Charlotte Maier, Grant Shaud, Kate Levy, Ken Land.
Photo by Meghan Moore.

Do you think *Out of the City* has anything to teach us about love?

I never go at it with the idea that I'm teaching, because I don't feel that that's what I'm trying to do. What I hope is that people just experience something, and even something visceral, about what it is to keep love active.

I think that marriages are hard to sustain, and I'm very lucky: I met my husband and I liked him immediately, and I actually proposed to him on our second date. We were married in nine months, and we've now been together 38 years. So the fact that I have a good marriage is a very fueling thing, and it allows me to investigate marriage all the time.

I think that one of the difficulties with marriage is that we become annoyed by all the little things. They accumulate, and then we find out we're not actually as excited about each other as we once were. And if we just choose to take another look, and have another conversation, we can sparkle up our lives a little bit.

You've mentioned that *A Midsummer Night's Dream* was an influence in the script.

It was, but not in a huge way. The thing that Shakespeare does is to literally take his characters out of the city in order for them to have sensual, magical lives, and that's what happens in *A Midsummer Night's Dream*. All the prescribed boundaries just fall apart and explode, and people fall in love. They behave in peculiar, funny, foolish ways, and are in hot pursuit of one another, and make declarations. I feel that this freedom that Shakespeare finds, when he removes people from urban rules, was something that mattered to me: all the playfulness of that play.

I wanted to take them out of the city—which is why I named it that—and put them in a foreign environment, a bed and breakfast surrounded by woods, and give them a lake where Carol's trying to communicate and can't get past her husband's throwing rocks, and see what happens to the marriage.

What is it about that setting that makes the play work?

I think it's pagan and earthy. A city is far more formal, far more determined, far more filled with rules, and has far more people that you are trying in one way or another to impress. The forest, the trees, the earth itself, it all has a sensuality to it, that I think unlocks and undoes the corseted situation of urban life.

You appeared in the world premiere of *Out of the City*, in Vermont. Was that the first you had gone back to acting in some time?

It was. I'd done small things, a couple of guest spots on *Law and Order*, readings, workshops, one-acts. So I still had a bit of a hold on it. But I hadn't been in a full-out, memorize-the-whole-play-rehearsal-process in front of people thing in a while.

Do you have a favorite moment in the show, or favorite character?

It changes. It was a funny thing to be the author, and to be in the cast in Vermont. In rehearsal, I found myself listening to it, which isn't what you want to do when you're actually in it.

Once I inhabited it, and stopped evaluating it, I found that my favorite moments changed, and that was a good thing, because it meant that I was alive to the moment.

I loved a lot of the moments when there were bursts of laughter. But it was also fun in the pauses... when it was suddenly quiet, when we were all just standing onstage, Looking at the scarf on the floor, after the scarf has been thrown, and it's just there.

I like the end of the play. And I like the first kiss. I like all the kisses.

PASSION IN THE POCONOS

The Pocono Mountains are a section of the Appalachians that run through northeastern Pennsylvania. The region has held a long-standing reputation as a prime destination for lovers old and new.

The tourist industry has played a key role in the Poconos' economy since the first boarding house hotel was established in 1829. By the 20th century, thousands of visitors from Philadelphia and New York were flocking to the Poconos during summer vacations; but it was following World War II that the Poconos came to be seen as a romantic getaway to rival Niagara Falls, as just-returned soldiers honeymooned in rural Pennsylvania with their new brides. In 1971, *Life Magazine* ran a picture of two lovers unclothed in a heart-shaped bathtub at a Poconos resort, further cementing the region's image.

The word "Pocono" itself has no meaning, but is probably derived from the Delaware Indian word *Pocohanne*, meaning "stream between two mountains" (referring to the Delaware River). The Poconos are characterized by picturesque lakes, rivers, and waterfalls, hardwood forests, and vistas from mountaintops reaching over 2,500 feet.

Today, the region draws more families than couples, its natural gems enhanced by water parks, mini-golf courses, family resorts and ski mountains. It has even been pulling in business conferences and corporate events; but you'll still find 37 bed and breakfasts (like the one on stage) that can cast a romantic Pocono Mountains spell.

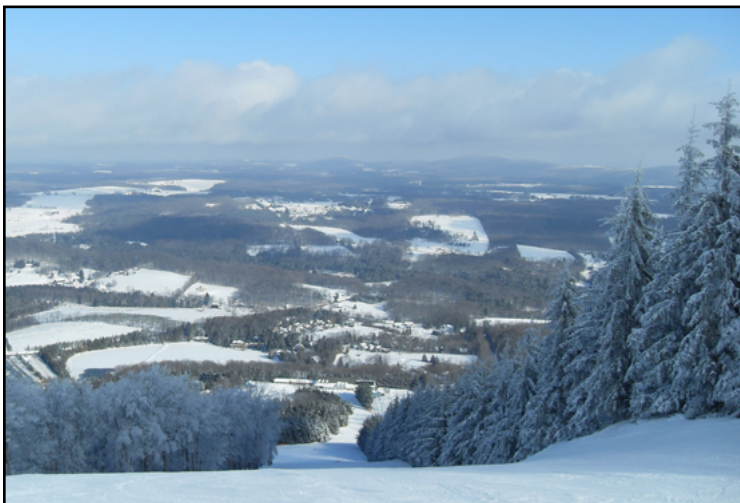
Sources:
www.800poconos.com
www.etymonline.com
"Passion in the Poconos," by Susan Spano. *Smithsonian Magazine*, June 1, 2012. Smithsonianmag.com



A Pocono Mountain lake in October. Photo by William Cassidy.



Photo by Eric Tomenga



Winter from the north knob of Elk Mountain, the highest point in the Pocono Mountains. Photo by Ekem.

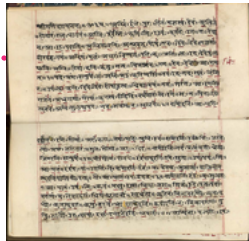


DON'T KNOW MUCH ABOUT KISSTORY

People have been kissing for Millennia, but our cultural understanding of kisses—and what they actually mean—is ever-evolving.

1500 BCE:

The first literary reference to romantic kissing appears in India's Vedic Sanskrit texts. No specific word exists for "kiss;" it shares a name with words for "sniff," "smell," and "touch."



The earliest literary references to romantic kissing are in Vedic Sanskrit.

600's-700's BCE:

In Homer's *The Odyssey*, Odysseus is kissed by his slaves upon his return home, as a sign of respect—but not on his lips, since the slaves are his inferiors.

400's BCE:

Herodotus, in his writings about the Persians, describes many different types of kissing tied to social standing. Equals would kiss on the lips, but a disparity in class or status meant kissing on the cheek. Similar examples show up in ancient Numidian and Ethiopian cultures.

400's-300's BCE:

The comedies of Aristophanes distinguish between many types of kisses. Roughly translated: the "spread-outer," the "weaver," the "pot kiss," the "doorbolt," the "limper," the "door hinge," and more.



1st Century CE:

The Druids may have originated the tradition of kissing under mistletoe. They believed in the plant's power as a medicine and fertility enhancer.



"Two Druids," 19th-century engraving based on a 1719 illustration by Bernard Montfaucon.

1st Century CE:

The Roman poet Martial describes the "mouth fixation" of Roman men: "Every neighbor, every hairy-faced farmer, presses on you with a strongly-scented kiss. Here the weaver assails you, there the fuller and the cobbler, who has just been kissing leather."

Meanwhile, Emperor Tiberius attempts to ban the practice in order to stop the spread of disease.

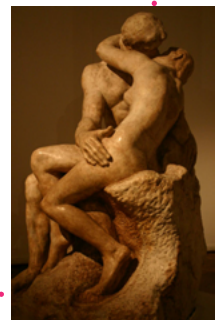
There are three words for "kiss" in Latin:

Osculum: The social or friendship kiss, or the kiss out of respect.

Basium: The affectionate kiss, for family members.

Sarium: The erotic kiss

Kissing as a public declaration of romantic commitment (as in a wedding) originates in Ancient Rome as well.



Rodin's 1889 sculpture, "The Kiss"

1200's:

The "Kiss of Peace," shared between reverential churchgoers, eventually gives way to the practice of "Kissing the Disk," in which one piously kiss a round plate depicting Christian religious imagery (called a Pax-Board). Even this leads to trouble when men scramble to kiss the same spot on the disk as an attractive woman.

1499:

Dutch Scholar Desiderius Erasmus notes of his travels in England that "wherever you go, you are received on all hands with kisses... The first act of hospitality is a kiss, and when guests depart, the same entertainment is repeated... In fact wherever you turn, you are never without it."



Desiderius Erasmus portrait by Hans Holbein the Younger.

1665:

During the great plague of London, the kiss as a greeting understandably takes the back seat, giving rise to the wave, curtsy, bow, and hat-tip.

Late 1700's:

By the Industrial Revolution, the hand-kiss has become popular in England, eventually evolving into the handshake.

1680:

German scholar Martin Von Kemppe composes an encyclopedia of kisses, the *Corpus Polyhistoricum de Osculis*. Its 1,040 pages exhaustively describe over 20 types of kissing.

ROMANTIC CHEMISTRY

Kissing isn't just a fun way to pass the time at a B&B—it affects us at a physiological and chemical level. When we kiss, our blood vessels dilate, our breathing deepens, and our bodies release a host of neurotransmitters and hormones:

No wonder it's such a hot topic of conversation!

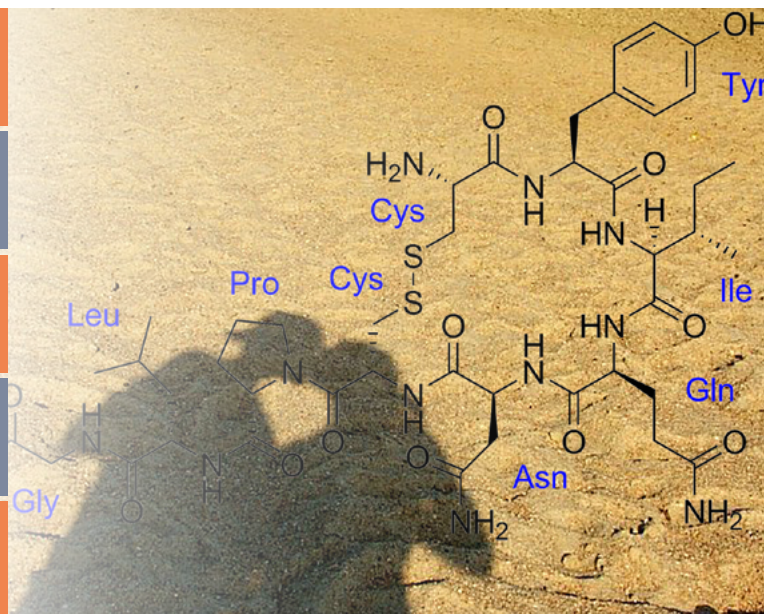
Oxytocin: fosters feelings of attachment and affection.

Serotonin: regulates our emotions and creates feelings of obsession

Norepinephrine: creates the sensation of being weak in the knees.

Adrenaline: gives us a natural “high.”

Dopamine: responsible for elation, craving, and addiction.



Kiss me. Photo by Sarah Rosenau Korf (modified).

SUPERIOR CHARCOAL

In **Out of the City**, Matt and Dan bring back “superior charcoal” to their wives. But what, exactly, is superior charcoal?

Last fall, **thesweethome.com** launched an investigation. After 100 combined hours of research, testing, eating, and comparing, here are the results:



THE BEST CHARCOAL FOR GRILLING

By Kit Dillon
September 3, 2014

HOW WE PICKED & TESTED

In the search for the Best Charcoal, we looked at four main criteria:

- Burn Time
- Heat Consistency
- Ash Buildup
- Taste

We interviewed lots of grilling experts, and though they had different recommendations on products, they all told us that **consistency is paramount**. So we focused on briquettes, and not lump wood charcoal.



THE CONTENDERS

Our list of contenders came from researching a number of online reviews, stalking recommendations on forums like BBQ-brethren.com, and from our own results last year, when we ran a similar test, that did include lump wood. This left us with 7 main contenders:

- Kingsford Original Brand (\$.24 per lb.)
- Kingsford Competition Brand (\$.90 per lb.)
- Royal Oak Briquettes (\$.73 per lb.)
- Nature-Glo Old Hickory Briquettes (\$.37 per lb. + shipping)
- Stubb's Briquettes (\$.93 per lb.)
- Co-Shell Briquettes (\$.55 per lb.)
- Trader Joe's Brand Briquettes (\$.44 per lb.)

I spent a day on my roof, burning through controlled batches of all 7 varieties.



We skipped any self-lighting briquettes because there's no need to add extra chemicals when a good charcoal chimney will do the job.

Although the fairest way of testing charcoal is to weigh it out into equal piles to ensure uniform amounts of carbon despite differing densities, it's not the most realistic. Instead, we measured our charcoal by volume, filling up our 250-cubic-inch chimney to the designated “full” line each time like normal people.

Once the top pieces of charcoal were ignited, **we poured the coals** into one side of a standard 22.5-inch Weber One Touch Gold kettle grill and **recorded a range of temperatures** along the pile every five minutes using a Fluke Ti32 thermal imager. Once the charcoal was finished burning, we **measured the ash production** by volume as well. The grill remained uncovered during the burn with the bottom vents half open. At 60 minutes, if there was still charcoal burning, I gave the grill three solid shakes to see how the briquettes were holding up. At this point, usually the charcoal pile was so small and covered with ash that you probably would have added a new chimney's worth if you were to continue grilling. For a few brands, this knocking gave **new life to the coals**, and for others it was pretty much the end of the line.

We also performed a fairly subjective **taste test** with four friends as ‘food tasters’ and several pounds of near identical pre-made ½-lb., all-beef burgers from Western Beef. Our other testing goal (beyond taste) was to see how well done our burgers cooked over each charcoal. To that end we cooked each burger for four minutes on each side, cooking burgers successively over the course of 40 minutes or until they became too raw to eat.

What we observed was that **different charcoals really did give off different radiations of heat** despite having similar surface temperatures, and that certain charcoals did impart **distinct flavors onto the burgers** we cooked. For our tastes, the charcoals that provided the highest searing heat also imparted the best flavor to our burgers overall. None of the charcoal we tested gave our food a ‘bad’ or too acrid flavor. How you like your food to taste remains a matter of personal preference, and different cooking techniques will create different results. Specifically, we noted that burgers cooked over Kingsford Original had **the most unique flavor and smell**, Nature-Glo Old Hickory imbued the **sweetest taste**, and Stubbs created the **strongest seared flavor**. Coshell Charcoal, made of coconut husks, had the gentlest radiating heat and mildest (almost nonexistent) grilling flavor, which did allow for a lot more **flavor of the burger** to stand out.

OUR PICK

Stubb's 100% All-Natural Briquettes burn pure with no negative taste characteristics and generate minimal ash to get blown into your food. Their consistent size and shape translates to consistent temperature performance

According to our tests (*all degrees Fahrenheit*), Stubb's held its high-end surface temp of 1,000 degrees for 45 minutes and only ever bottomed out at 825 degrees.

Despite being an all-natural briquette, Stubb's didn't display any of the sparking or popping associated with other all-natural briquettes, though it does, without added oxidizers, take about five to ten minutes longer longer to light than its competitors. Stubb's had relatively few dead zones from ash build-up and a white, slightly-bitter-but-not-unpleasant smoke.

SHOULD I UPGRADE?

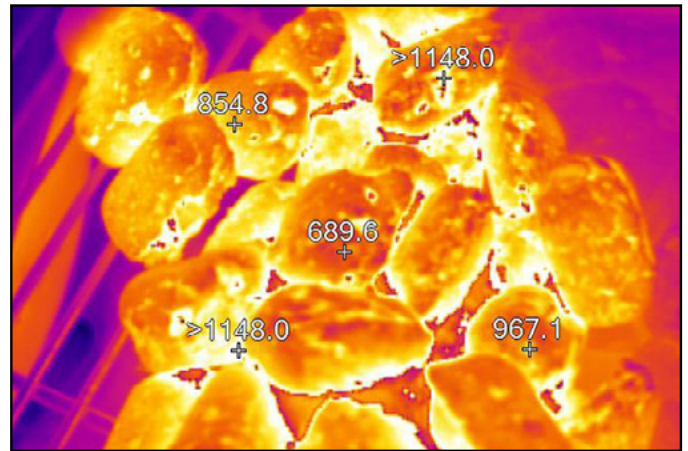
The simple fact is that there is no 'perfect' charcoal product on the market today. There are too many styles of grilling and smoking, too many grill types, and too many opinions for one charcoal to meet every person's needs. As Craig "Meathead" Goldwyn has pointed out many times before on www.amazingribs.com, your choice of charcoal is not nearly as important as almost everything else you do before you begin cooking. "Pick one consistent brand of briquet," says Meathead, "learn it, and stick with it for a year until you have all the other variables under control. The quality of the raw food, seasoning, sauce, cooking temp, and serving temp far outweigh the impact of charcoal on outcome."

We highly recommend the full version of this condensed article, available at www.thesweethome.com/reviews/best-charcoal-for-grilling

thesweethome.com (and its sister site thewirecutter.com) are devoted to testing the best gadgets, gear, and home goods, to make it easier for you to buy some great gear quickly and get on with your life.



Stubb's is widely available and puts out sustained high temperatures throughout its cook time, which gives you excellent charring and searing no matter when you throw down your steaks.



Stubb's briquettes right after they were dumped from our chimney. The briquette in the middle was on the very top of the pile and is just starting to light, hence the cold spot.

WHAT'S IN A GNOME?

Out of the City's garden gnome is just one in a sprawling family of lawn statues. Here are our five favorite facts about his distinguished heritage:

1.

The first mass-produced garden gnomes were made of clay, and came from Germany in the 1870's. There is a dispute as to which craftsman started making them first. Similar statues had existed for millennia.



Traditional clay garden gnome, with paint faded.

2.

The Royal Horticultural Society of Britain had a longstanding ban on garden gnomes for competitive shows. The ban was finally lifted for the Chelsea Flower Show of 2013.



3.

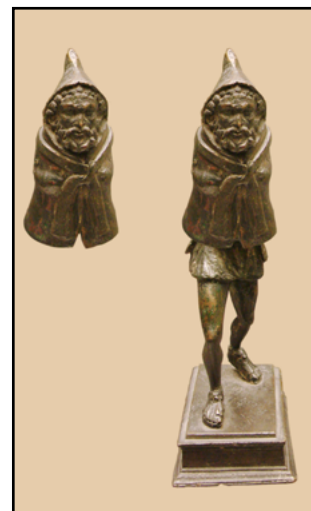
German gnomes were the inspiration for the dwarves of Disney's 1937 classic film *Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs*. In German folklore, gnomes are often depicted as miners.



Garden gnomes are famously well-traveled.

4.

The first instance of the "traveling gnome" was recorded in Sydney, Australia in 1986. The traveling gnome tradition involves stealing someone else's garden gnome, taking it to a far-off location, photographing it, and returning it to its owner with pictures from its travels. The tradition was popularized by the 2001 film *Amelie*.



1st-century bronze statuette of Priapus. The statue's torso lifts off to reveal a phallus underneath.

5.

Ancient lawn statues of Priapus, an ancient Greco-Roman fertility god, are considered by some to be the predecessor to the modern garden gnome. Priapus, son of Aphrodite and Dionysus, is protector of livestock, garden produce, and male genitalia.

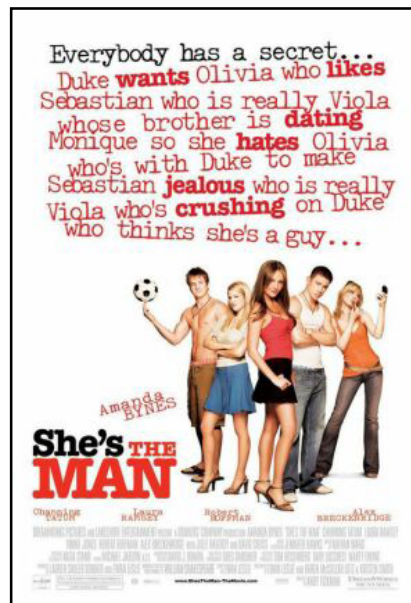
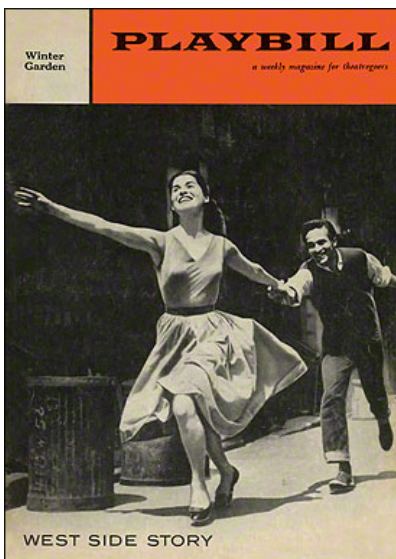
SHAKESPEAREAN SHENANIGANS

Leslie Ayvazian cites Shakespeare's *A Midsummer Night's Dream* as an influence for *Out of the City*.

Many works for both stage and screen are heavily influenced by Shakespeare's work, even if not direct adaptations. To name just a few:

- **The Boys from Syracuse** (1938): The Rodgers and Hart Broadway musical has *The Comedy of Errors* as its basis.
- **Forbidden Planet** (1956): One of the first big-budget sci-fi films was loosely based on *The Tempest*, following a space-traveling crew as they investigate the fate of a planet inhabited by scientists.
- **West Side Story** (1957): The classic Broadway musical based on *Romeo and Juliet* was, in its very earliest stages, titled *East Side Story*, with the central conflict between Jews and Catholics rather than Whites and Puerto Ricans.
- **All Night Long** (1962): The 1962 update of *Othello* sets the action in the London jazz scene and features appearances by numerous jazz luminaries, including Charles Mingus and Dave Brubeck.
- **She's the Man** (2006): The 2006 teen comedy stars Amanda Bynes and Channing Tatum as Viola and Duke in a plot inspired by *Twelfth Night*.
- **Sons of Anarchy** (2008-2014): The recently concluded FX motorcycle gang crime drama has ties to *Hamlet*. Several episode titles are allusions to moments in Shakespeare's script, such as "Burnt and Purged Away," "To Be (Parts I and II)," "To Thine Own Self," and "What a Piece of Work is Man."

Sources: Wikipedia.org, IMDb.com



DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. What do you think makes the first kiss happen—both short term and long term?
2. Why do you think Matt is so fixated on hitting the log? If you were in Matt's spot, would you ask Carol stay at the lake, or to leave?
3. Do you see any fundamental differences between Matt and Carol's marriage, and Jill and Dan's?
4. Who in the play do you think is best at communicating? Who do you think is the worst?
5. Do you think the play's ending is a happy ending?

FURTHER READING

"Passion in the Poconos," by Susan Spano. *Smithsonian Magazine*, June 1, 2012. Smithsonianmag.com (article)

Better in the Poconos by Lawrence Squeri (book)

The Science of Kissing by Sheril Kirshenbaum (book)

The Kiss in History by Karen Harvey (book)

A Midsummer Night's Dream, by William Shakespeare (play)

"The Best Charcoal for Grilling," by Kit Dillon. *The Sweethome*, September 3, 2014. www.thesweethome.com (product review)

"Gnomes have the last laugh as the Chelsea Flower Show lift the ban after 170 years," by Anna Pukas. *The Express*, February 11, 2013. express.co.uk. (article)

THANK YOU

Special thanks to the following people for their help in assembling this PlayGuide:

- Elizabeth Richardson
800poconos.com
- Christopher Mascari
thesweethome.com/thewirecutter.com
- Eric Tomenga