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Musical Sweethearts Darin &
Brooke Aldridge p14

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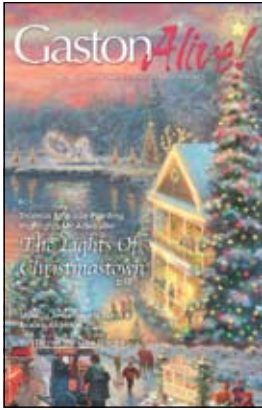
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about the cover



This months cover shows detail from the New Thomas Kinkade painting “The Lights Of Christmastown,” commissioned by McAdenville local Jay McCosh. See related story page 10. Cover graphic design by David James.

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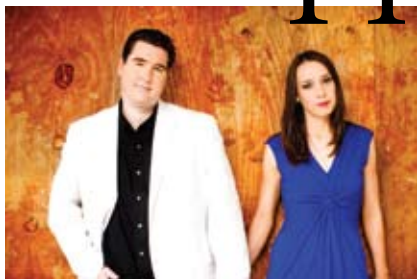
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*Thomas Kinkade's
Newest Creation Is Called*

THE LIGHTS OF CHRISTMASTOWN

By
David Hamrick

We met recently with Jay McCosh, owner of the Christmastown Thomas Kinkade Signature Gallery in McAdenville to find out more about the exciting new painting called "The Lights of Christmastown".

GA!: Jay, congratulations on the new painting! I understand that it has been a four year process-was the painting your idea originally?

Jay: Growing up in Gastonia, McAdenville was an annual tradition for us as it is for many people. When we relocated the gallery here from Carolina Place four and a half years ago, I instantly thought based on Thom's work that it would be a natural choice as it already resembles much of Thom's work and when you add the element of Christmastown to it, the idea seemed more than obvious. So the first chance I got I started pitching the idea to the company.



Ronda Bunch, Director Of Creative Development and Master Highlighter highlights a painting.

GA! Tell us a little about the process of how the painting came about- you took hundreds of pictures of McAdenville...

Jay: The last few years when Thom's brother Patrick would come for an event here in the gallery in December I told him it was his penance to come to McAdenville this time of year every year until Thom painted it. So, early 2010 Pat finally got the "go ahead" from Thom that he would do it. Since then Pat and I have planned the painting and I took hundred of photos of all the elements I thought we needed to include in the painting, from different angles and different times of day and different seasons.

GA! Was Thom's brother Patrick involved?

Jay: As well as helping to plan the painting, he was also Thom's Art Director on this one, since he had spent so much time here over the last few years and felt so strongly that Thom should celebrate this town on canvas.



Jay McCosh & Dr. Patrick Kinkade unveiling the painting.

GA! What about the number of pieces available as compared to a normal Kinkade piece?

Jay: Being this is such a special piece, the number is extremely low compared to his normal releases.

GA!: How can folks find out more, or see the actual artwork?

Jay: They can call us, stop by or check out our website at www.christmastowngallery.com

GA!: For those that haven't been, tell us a little about your gallery.



Dr. Patrick Kinkade, brother of artist Thomas Kinkade

Jay: The gallery started over in Carolina Place Mall over 16 years ago. When the former gallery owner retired I took it over and we were only there a year when a great opportunity came to move it here to McAdenville. Since the initial move we have already moved once within McAdenville with 4 times our original space here in town. Now we are the only Thomas Kinkade Signature Gallery in the Charlotte area, with over 100 of his pieces on display at any given time.

The Christmastown Thomas Kinkade Signature Gallery

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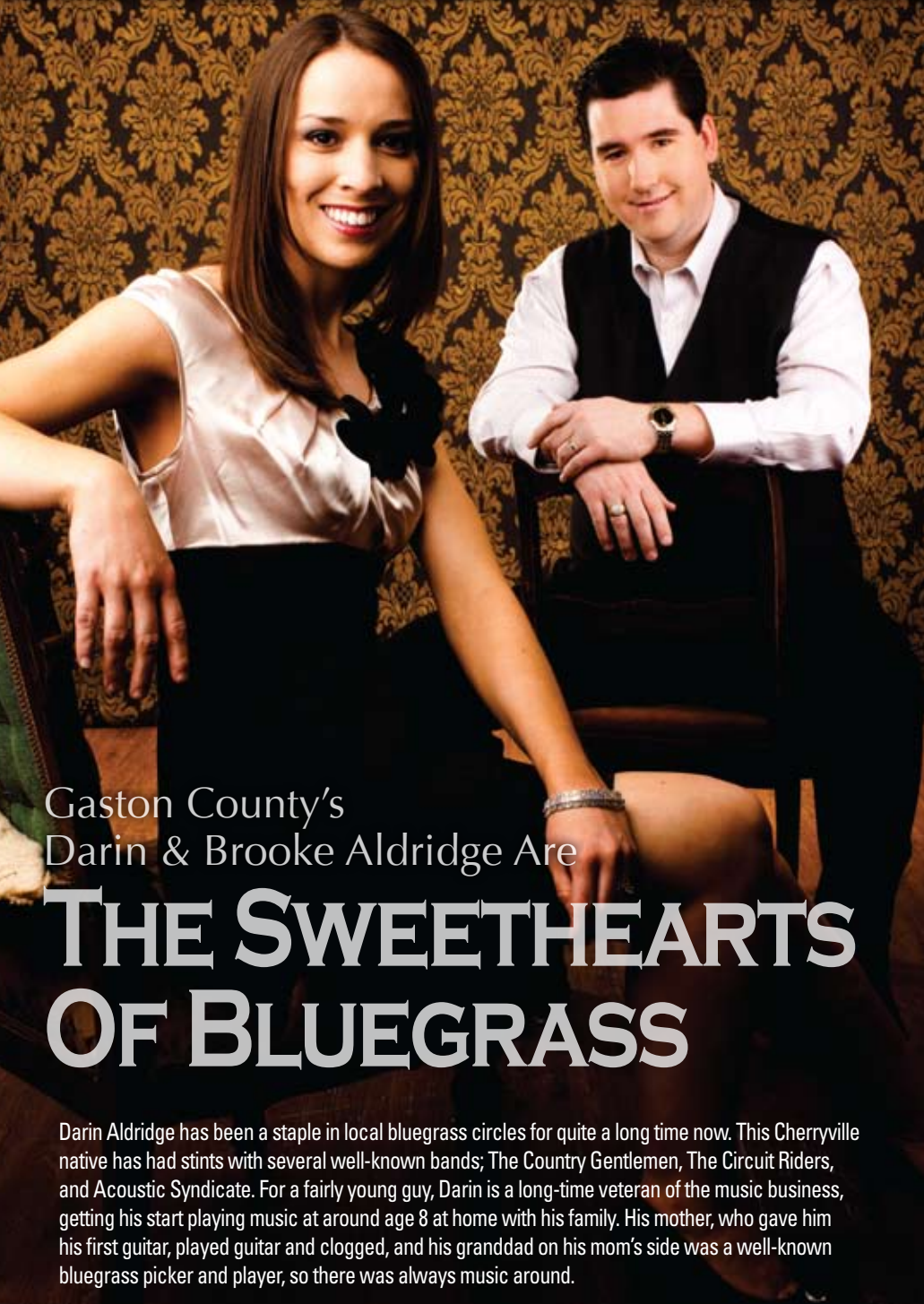
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MUSIC



Gaston County's
Darin & Brooke Aldridge Are

THE SWEETHEARTS OF BLUEGRASS

Darin Aldridge has been a staple in local bluegrass circles for quite a long time now. This Cherryville native has had stints with several well-known bands; The Country Gentlemen, The Circuit Riders, and Acoustic Syndicate. For a fairly young guy, Darin is a long-time veteran of the music business, getting his start playing music at around age 8 at home with his family. His mother, who gave him his first guitar, played guitar and clogged, and his granddad on his mom's side was a well-known bluegrass picker and player, so there was always music around.

In his teen years, Darin played in a garage band with his brother Devon, playing mostly popular rock and roll on the radio. About the same time he was attending local bluegrass jams around the area, and before too long he was in a bluegrass band playing at local churches and festivals. Darin is known to play almost anything with strings on it, but in the beginning was primarily a guitar player. He learned to play the mandolin almost by accident. While practicing with his bluegrass band as a teen, the mandolin player was struggling trying to learn the opening to a song. Darin picked up the mandolin and said "play it like this!" The mandolin player shook his head and said "You just keep the mandolin, I'll play something else".



**by Ben Dungan
& David Hamrick**
bdungan@charter.net



You'd think getting married and settling down would slow a man down. Not so with Darin. He and his wife, Brooke Justice Aldridge, have kept the music playing. Brooke grew up with music as well, but in a different venue. Growing up in Avery County in the mountains, Brooke had a pretty amazing alto voice even as a youngster. Her family drove her to singing competitions far and wide, which she almost



always won. With Darin's instrumental virtuosity, and Brooke's one in a million voice, they are a bluegrass dream team. This husband and wife duo continues to play music all over the country and have just released their third album, "So Much In Between", back in August of this year.

Darin and Brooke, also known as America's Bluegrass Sweethearts, aim to uplift and inspire with the music they create. All twelve songs chosen for this latest album does just that showcasing such themes as happiness, faith and love. In fact, four of the twelve songs have love in the title.

With *So Much In Between*, Darin and Brooke are keeping their momentum going from their previous album. They burst on the national scene in 2010 with the release of their self-titled album. As a result, they have garnered quite a bit of attention and notoriety. Just this past summer, the International Bluegrass Music Association (IBMA) nominated them for Emerging Artist of the Year.

And while bluegrass circles have long been a fan of Darin's work, he is reaching a newer audience with his work with Brooke. The new album is a little more Americana and country sounding than past albums. Yet, it's still rooted in the bluegrass and gospel music that both he and Brooke are known for.

Even some heavy hitters in Nashville are taking notice. The great country singer and songwriter, Tom T. Hall, makes an appearance on the new album. Not only did he write a song for Darin & Brooke, but he even sneaks in some vocals on his song, "Our Little World".

With the help of talented new band members Rachel Johnson Boyd and Dwayne Anderson, along with veteran Chris Bryant, Brooke and Darin are poised to make 2012 their best year yet for the sweethearts of bluegrass.



Darin & Brooke Aldridge and band.



**To learn more about Darin and Brooke Aldridge,
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COOKING WITH THE GLENN'S

This is the Holiday issue of *Gaston Alive!* and instead of our usual recipe this month I thought I would talk about a charitable event that is held every year in Mount Holly. The event is a wine tasting event where the proceeds go to Hospice of Gaston County. What an amazing cause and just as amazing are the individuals who dedicate their time and efforts. This is a great event where quite a few special people in the community work extremely hard to ensure that all that attend have an exceptional experience.

While the wines and foods are a great part of the evening, there is also a silent auction that is held. The silent auction has everything from works of art, to gift certificates to spas and restaurants. One of the silent auction items the last two years has been an evening of cooking provided by Cooking with the Glenn's. Not to sound like I am bragging here, but we usually fetch a pretty penny. All of the proceeds that have been collected from the Cooking with the Glenn's event have gone directly to Hospice.

This year we just recently were able to cook for the party of six that bid and won the evening with us (by the way they have been the top bidders the last two years). They are phenomenal individuals and we have really enjoyed cooking for them.

Here is our menu from this year's dinner:

Cocktails

Lemon Drop Martini's with an amuse-bouche of salmon
Appetizers consisted of a Selection of Wood Fired Italian Oven Flat Breads (Glenn has one at his house!)
Fig and Goat Cheese
Mushroom and Manchego
Pear with Sautéed Onion and Gorgonzola
Salad Course
Mandarin Orange, Goat Cheese and Shaved Fennel with Mixed Baby Green Salad
Soup Course
Seven Mushroom Soup

Dinner

Pork Loin Chops Stuffed with Goat Cheese and Sundried Tomatoes,
Creamed Spinach and Rosemary Roasted Fingerling Potatoes

Dessert

Chocolate Toffee Pecan Tart with a Crème Anglaise Sauce





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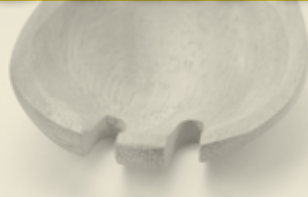
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COOKING



>>Continued from Page 17.

Chocolate Toffee Pecan Tart with a Crème Anglaise Sauce

Ingredients

For the Dough:

1 cup all-purpose flour, plus more for dusting
 1/2 cup Dutch-process cocoa powder
 1/2 cup confectioners' sugar
 1/4 teaspoon salt
 1 stick cold unsalted butter, cut into 1/2-inch pieces
 1 large egg, beaten

For the Filling:

1 1/2 cups pecan halves
 10 tablespoons unsalted butter
 6 tablespoons granulated sugar
 1 teaspoon vanilla extract
 1/4 teaspoon kosher salt
 2/3 cup light corn syrup
 1/4 cup packed dark brown sugar
 3 large eggs, beaten
 3 tablespoons bourbon

Directions

Make the dough: Pulse the flour, cocoa, confectioners' sugar and salt in a food processor until combined. Add the butter; pulse until the mixture looks like coarse meal with pea-size bits of butter. Add the egg and pulse once or twice. (Stop before the dough gathers into a ball.) Turn out onto a sheet of plastic wrap and press into a disk. Wrap tightly and refrigerate until firm, at least 1 hour.

Place the dough on a large sheet of lightly floured parchment paper. Roll into a 12-inch round, no more than 1/8 inch thick. Invert the dough over a 9-inch tart pan with a removable bottom and peel off the parchment; press the dough into the bottom and sides of the pan. (If the dough tears, just pat it back together.) Trim the excess dough. Cover with plastic wrap and chill at least 1 hour.

Position racks in the middle and lower third of the oven; preheat to 350 degrees F. Line the crust with foil, then fill with pie weights or dried beans. Bake on the middle rack, 20 minutes. Remove the foil and weights and continue baking until crisp, 7 to 10 minutes. Transfer to a rack to cool completely.

Prepare the filling: Coarsely chop 1 cup pecans. Combine the butter, granulated sugar, vanilla and kosher salt in a saucepan and bring to a boil over medium-high heat. Cook, stirring, until the mixture turns dark amber, 6 to 8 minutes. Immediately stir in the chopped pecans and cook 1 to 2 more minutes. Remove from the heat and whisk in the corn syrup and brown sugar until dissolved. Cool until lukewarm, then whisk in the eggs and bourbon until combined. (The tart can be made 1 day ahead up to this point; cover and refrigerate the filling and wrap the cooled crust in plastic wrap.)

Increase the oven temperature to 375 degrees F. Place the tart shell on a baking sheet and pour in the filling up to the brim. Arrange the remaining 1/2 cup pecan halves on top. Bake on the lower oven rack until the tart is evenly browned and slightly domed in the center, about 40 minutes. Transfer to a rack to cool completely.

This year the Hospice event entitled Have a Heart for Hospice will be on Thursday, February 9th. Be on the look out for further information regarding this event in next month's issue.

Have a very Merry Christmas and Happy New Year,

Glenn and Glenn



WITH THE GLENN'S

Chocolate Coffee Pecan

Want to Go?

Have A Heart For Hospice

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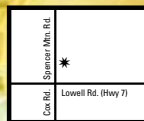
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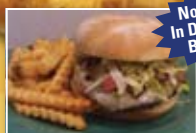
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