

Celebrating Connecticut

by Michelle Falcone, Celebrate Connecticut, LLC

After enjoying a variety of intimate vacation tours in Europe, I learned that travel was most memorable and interesting when shared with like minded adventurers. Upon returning home from each vacation, I was sure that Connecticut was filled with similar beautiful, cultural and historical places. As my affinity for Connecticut grew over the years since I relocated to the state in 1994, I searched for local tours that offered day trips with the extra touch of personal service and the companionship of an intimate group that I had experienced on my vacations. Unable to find what I was looking for, I thought about starting a company that would specialize in turning tours into unforgettable events. My growing passion for all things Connecticut, coupled with my love of celebrations, led me to form Celebrate Connecticut.

The true impetus behind Celebrate Connecticut, however, is *Consummate Connecticut: Day Trips with Panache*, a five-star Amazon rated and most comprehensive day trip guidebook on the state, written in 2006 by my neighbor and friend, Stacy Lytwyn (Maxwell), another longtime Easton resident. I had known Stacy since 2001 - I loved her book, and we shared a passion for travel adventures. In 2014 we met to formulate plans for a local day trip tour business and three years later I launched Celebrate Connecticut, LLC. Since December of 2017, I have executed day trips throughout the state and have provided custom-tailored tours and milestone celebrations for anyone looking for an authentic experience. It is my hope to continue planning fun and interesting excursions to the hidden gems throughout Connecticut and to collaborate with expert travel writers and tour guides like Stacy Lytwyn.

As a Bronx native, and someone who was used to the hustle and bustle of a New York City borough, it took some years for me to settle into life in a small Connecticut rural town - a town with no streetlights, one full traffic light and limited cell service. Although many view Easton as a “sleepy” town (the way I did), I believe that Easton is earning a coveted spot on the day trip traveler’s bucket list, and, for that reason, residents of Easton may have seen a Celebrate Connecticut elite bus transporting curious visitors around town. Although Easton is only one of numerous day trips that Celebrate Connecticut offers, it is one that consistently receives rave reviews from guests. Guided by longtime Easton resident and former board member of the Historical Society of Easton, Frank Pagliaro, each tour is full of interesting facts and charged storytelling. Frank loves the opportunity the tours give him to “share...the everyday life of people 100, 200, 300 years ago and whose footprints we can still find if we’re willing to look.” Even longtime Easton residents are surprised by how much they learn. I hope to see more visitors from surrounding towns and states come to Easton not only to enjoy pumpkins and Christmas trees but to learn about the town’s rich history, savor local delicacies and shop for specialty items in the farm markets.

It has become my dream to expose clients to all that Connecticut has to offer, while helping them celebrate every moment in life. I look forward to expanding the private and organized tours that highlight the beauty and history of such places as Bridgeport, Waterbury, Litchfield County,

the Shoreline...and ushering locals and visitors to every corner of the state and in between. To experience a Celebrate Connecticut excursion, visit celebratect.com and check out the current tours or call 203-650-3959 to customize an excursion tailored to your group's interests.