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Why Just One Christmas Tree? The Festival of Trees, Maine

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By Jan Ross

I'm just going to put it out there – I have a pretty damn cool Christmas tree. Bedecked with hundreds of tiny colored lights and covered with dozens of ornaments, I spend a great deal of time each year carefully placing each ornament delicately on a branch.

Each beautiful and unique ornament was purchased in one of the many locations around the world we have visited so one branch may sport a tiny windmill from Amsterdam, another a miniature gold Eiffel tower and a third a carefully painted and preserved starfish from the beach.

But my fabulous tree pales in comparison to the gorgeous examples that you will find at the annual Festival of Trees in Methuen, Maine right outside Boston. Back in 1994, volunteers who worked at the Tenney Gate House decided they needed a unique fundraiser to restore the Gatehouse, originally a two-story rough stone farmhouse built in 1830 and currently occupied by the Methuen Historical Society.

They came up with the idea of a fundraiser that would feature fully decorated Christmas trees which could be raffled off to pay for the extensive restoration costs.

The Festival of Trees they began in 1994 with 18 trees and a modest sum of \$3,100 has grown to over 200 beautifully decorated trees and provides not only the necessary funding for the Gate House but also offers grants to historic preservation projects throughout the Merrimack Valley, donating over \$1,200,00 to a variety of projects.

To take your chances on bringing home one of the lovely Christmas trees, you must purchase



Are you sure that's a Christmas tree?

raffle tickets at the event. A sheet of 26 tickets costs \$5.00 and you can purchase as many sheets as you wish. Just tear off your tickets and place them in the ticket container in front of the tree(s) you would like to win.

The trees will be raffled off on Sunday, December 2nd, beginning at 8:00 a.m. but you do not have to be present to win. If you have won, you will receive a phone call to pick up your tree that same day.

Not only will you be able to peruse some of the most beautifully decorated Christmas trees you have ever seen and possibly take one home if you win the raffle, you can also sample some delightful culinary masterpieces. The Festival of Trees TASTE event has also become a permanent fixture at the event, with 25 local restaurants providing a variety of incredible taste sensations from all over the world.

The 2012 host is chef and restaurateur Paul Wahlberg who has recently opened Wahlburgers with his brothers Donnie and Mark Wahlberg. This event will be on Friday, November 16 before the Festival of Trees begins the next day and tickets are \$50 per person.

The Methuen Festival of Trees is the largest in New England and one of the largest in the country. Over 27,000 people from all over the world attended last year and even more are expected this year when the 19th annual Festival of Trees begins on Saturday, November 17th. The event will be indoors at Valley Office Park, 13 Branch Street in Methuen, Maine. There will be plenty of free parking, handicap accessibility and direct access from Route 93.

There is, quite simply, no way you will ever have a Christmas tree quite as fabulous as mine.

But the winning the Festival of Trees raffle might come a close second.

<http://www.methuenfestivaloftrees.com/>

Planning a trip to Boston for the holidays? Get an early Christmas present by checking the [DealAngel hotel results for Boston](#) now!

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