

MY TAKE ON ANDRE AGASSI BY JUSTIN GIMELSTOB

DEUCE

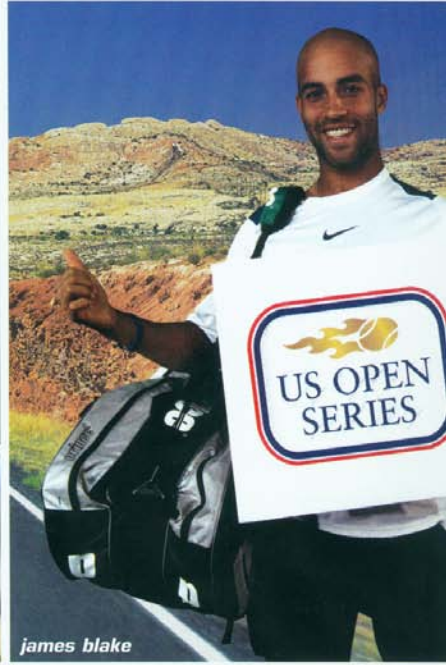
SUMMER 2006



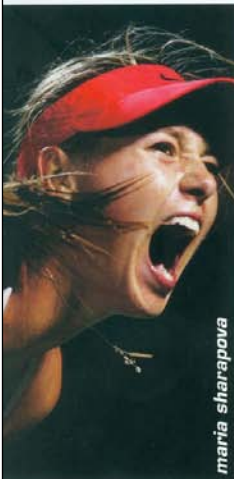
THE OFFICIAL
MAGAZINE OF
THE ATP AND
SONY ERICSSON
WTA TOUR



kim clijsters



james blake



maria sharapova



rafael nadal



andy roddick

THE GREATEST ROAD TRIP IN SPORTS

6 WEEKS | 10 TOURNAMENTS | 200 PLAYERS



venus williams



roger federer



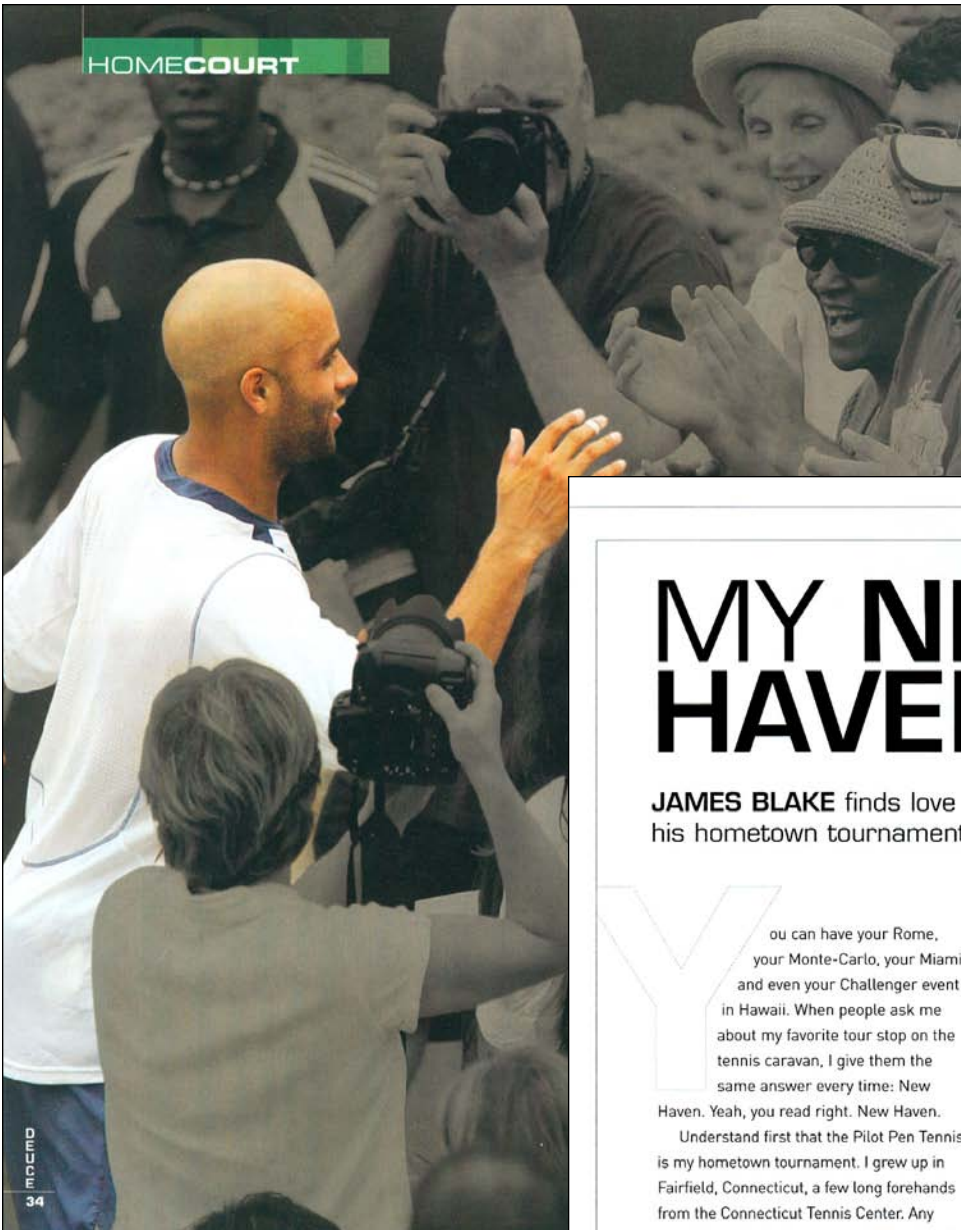
Deuce - Summer, 2006
Circulation XXX,XXX



www.pilotpentennis.com



www.infonewhaven.com



MY NEW HAVEN

JAMES BLAKE finds love at his hometown tournament.



You can have your Rome, your Monte-Carlo, your Miami and even your Challenger event in Hawaii. When people ask me about my favorite tour stop on the tennis caravan, I give them the same answer every time: New Haven. Yeah, you read right. New Haven.

Understand first that the Pilot Pen Tennis is my hometown tournament. I grew up in Fairfield, Connecticut, a few long forehands from the Connecticut Tennis Center. Any event that affords the opportunity to sleep in your own bed and eat at familiar restaurants automatically shoots up the charts. Ever since I was a little kid and the tournament was known as the Volvo International, it's been a big part of my late summer. This is one of the first events where my brother and I got to see professional tennis players—Ivan Lendl, Pat Rafter, Goran Ivanisevic—up close and in person.

Then, last year, New Haven took on even more significance for me. I went through a rough time starting in the spring of 2004. I nearly paralyzed myself running into a net post, and after that, the lows—the passing of my dad, a nasty bout with shingles—kept coming. It was in New Haven in 2005 that I finally caught a break. At last I was healthy, and on those familiar

hard courts, my game came together. In front of hundreds of friends and family members—the folks who had been supporting me since I was a kid, the folks who are allowed to call me Jimmy—I won my second ATP event. Two weeks later, I had beaten Rafael Nadal and was playing Andre Agassi in the quarterfinals of the US Open. Even now, I look at that magical week in New Haven as the catalyst for getting my career back on track.

But the truth is, even without all the personal connections, I love New Haven. It's like that girl who, at first glance, might not be so objectively attractive. But once you get to know her and get beyond the surface, she might as well be a supermodel. New Haven may not have the picturesque beaches or the hippest club scene or the stunning skyline. But it's a total gem.

The city is best known as the site of **Yale University**. Having gone to Harvard, I feel like I'm in violation of some sort of loyalty oath for saying this, but the Yale campus is gorgeous. The architecture—a mix of Gothic, Georgian and modern—is really stunning. A lot of people compare it to Oxford. There are world-class museums on campus, including the **British Art Museum**, which has the largest collection





of British art outside the U.K. You can also stroll up **Hillhouse Ave.**, which Charles Dickens once called "the most beautiful street in America."

But there's much more to the area than Yale. For starters, there's world-class food. Not truffles and seared ahi tuna and chichi cuisine. I mean food, food. Pizza for starters. **Pepe's** versus **Sally's** is the Red Sox versus Yankees debate of central Connecticut. People are squarely in one camp or the other and will defend their position for hours. (I'm partial to Pepe's. I used to be a vegetarian and ordered their cheese pies, but I reversed course last year—long story—and now love their pepperoni.) The truth is that you can't go wrong at either one, particularly

when you wash your food down with a cold **Elm City**, the local microbrew. And since the establishments are a few blocks from each other in the **Wooster Square** area—New Haven's answer to Little Italy—the best play is to go to the one with the shorter line out front.

New Haven is also the alleged birthplace of the hamburger: **Louis' Lunch**, a tiny, flavorful joint on the fringes of the Yale campus, serves what is simply the best hamburger you'll ever eat. Just don't expect to be pampered. Ketchup is strictly prohibited and a sign behind the bar reads: "This isn't Burger King. You don't get it your way. You get it our way or you don't get the damn thing." If you're looking for something a little more upscale, you can't go wrong with

the tapas at **Ibiza**. As a bonus, it's probably your best bet for finding Feliciano Lopez after his matches.

Like most college towns, New Haven has a vibrant nightlife. **Bar** is a great lounge with a nice, chill vibe and a full-sized pool table—and you can play for free. My coach, Brian Barker, always likes **Toad's Place**. The motto there is, "Where the legends play," and it's totally accurate. Toad's is unassuming on the outside but over the past 20 years or so, just about every band you could name has played there. When I was in high school, the Rolling Stones even opened one of their tours at Toad's. Closer to my home in Fairfield, I like **Archie Moore's** and **Sea Grape**. Both are unpretentious, college-type bars with good jukeboxes.

New Haven is barely 60 miles north of Manhattan, commuting distance for plenty of souls braver than I am. Don't get me wrong—I love New York. But I'm just as inclined to head off in other directions. The **Connecticut coastline** is a string of quaint towns, flush with seafood shacks and bed and breakfasts. Head west and you'll hit **Litchfield County**, a quiet, pastoral pocket (Lendl has a place there) filled with hiking trails and antique shops.

Because of the weather, I spend at least half the year training in Florida. But when my career is over, I'm definitely moving back to central Connecticut. There's a mix of city and country. There's plenty to do. There's a comfort level I get nowhere else. In a word, it's home. ⁴⁰

PREVIOUS PAGE: James Blake feels the hometown pride after winning the Pilot Pen Tennis tournament. **ABOVE:** Blake enjoys Yale's stately grounds, which is tough for a Harvard man to admit.