

## The Greatest of All Time

# TOP DOG

Vin Scully entertained Dodger fans — even between innings

BY MARK LANGILL

So what exactly is Braunschweiger? That might be the only question remaining from Vin Scully's broadcasting career for those who have listened to his commercial pitches during Brooklyn and Los Angeles Dodger games over the past 67 seasons. Everything else seemed self-explanatory — the automobiles, gasoline, soda, beer, airlines, savings and loans, house paint, hi-fi stereos, televisions and shaving products that companies have only been too grateful to have him promote.

In the 1970s, Vin teamed with broadcast partner Jerry Doggett for those wonderfully hokey TV commercials for upcoming in-stadium promotions, including Camera Day with Vin taking a photo of the smiling Doggett and saying, "Gotcha!" Whenever the Dodgers were giving away a baseball, Vin advised kids to play with the ball and not stick it on a shelf to gather dust. Vin also touted the "Danny Goodman Specials" from the longtime Dodger Stadium merchandise director, who packaged his leftover inventory into \$2 deals.

As for the food, Vin could make anyone want to run to the grocery store and start a barbecue with Farmer John products, adding an "mmmm, mmm" sound effect to rival Sheriff Andy Taylor praising Aunt Bee's apple pie. For the record, Braunschweiger is a type of liverwurst.

The Farmer John company website explains the magnitude of its most famous spokesperson: "Dodger Dog hot dogs have become synonymous with the crack of the bat and the smell of the grass. So much so, in fact, that legendary announcer Vin Scully, a proud endorser, was once intro-



duced as 'Farmer John' himself. Naturally, we can't think of a bigger compliment."

But the most memorable product Vin touted was Dodger baseball. Although admittedly impartial on the air, Vin nevertheless made every game sound special. His pregame greeting to listeners was charged with anticipation and excitement, even if a fourth- and fifth-place team were going to battle on a muggy afternoon with pitchers whose credentials weren't exactly Easternmost in quality nor Westernmost in flavor.

Urban legend says the Union Oil Company of California (which memorably sponsored \$20 of "auto script" after every Dodger home run a generation ago) wasn't prepared to loan the Dodgers money in the early 1960s for their new ballpark construction until Vin was signed to a 10-year contract. Because the standard radio contracts didn't extend past seven years due to union rules, three option years were added.

So if the popularity of home-run hitting Babe Ruth led to a new Yankee Stadium in 1923, Dodger Stadium in a sense became "The House That Vin Built."

