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## SIMPLE PLEASURES

A RIVER REPORTER LIFESTYLE MAGAZINE



## CONTENTS

3

### features

- 3 **Rustic Simplicity**  
An old barn gets a second life in Forestburgh, NY  
By Erin Vanderberg
- 12 **Beach Lake Bread & Flour Power Bakery**  
Local quality, local flavor  
By Nancy Dymond
- 23 **Rich in History, Beauty and Art**  
The Old Stone House gallery and center  
By Jonathan Fox

### departments

- 7 **Decorate**  
4 Simple Ways to Reinvent Your Space  
By Lori Malone
- 14 **Eat**  
Take-Out Favorites Made Healthier at Home  
By Clarissa Chatley
- 21 **Ask the Expert**  
Happy Knitting  
By Marcia Nehemiah

## from the EDITOR

*“I adore simple pleasures. They are the last refuge of the complex.”*



TRR file photo

**Mary Greene**  
Section Editor

Although Oscar Wilde wrote these words in the latter half of the 1800s, they have never sounded truer. What could be more complex than the world we live in today, with its uncertain economy, turbulent and often disastrous weather patterns, wars being fought over faith and resources and our increasing dependence on complex technology? Never was the idea of creating a peaceful refuge for you and your loved ones more important—a place to gather, rest, regroup, relax and enjoy some simple pleasures. In this edition of **Our Country Home**, we show you how to create a peaceful and uncluttered environment for your household without breaking the bank. We treat you to the pleasures of take-out food prepared in your own kitchen, and invite you to follow your intuition while cooking. We entice you to sample the wares of our local bakeries and get to know the faces behind the businesses, and to visit one of our historic treasures, converted to a gallery and workshop space. We invite you to take up knitting with the help of an expert and maybe to join one of the many knitting circles in the region. And finally, we present to you a magnificent home re-visioned and constructed from a barn older than Oscar Wilde, with features that enhance a rustic, elegantly livable lifestyle.

Enjoy.

**Mary Greene**  
Section Editor

# OUR COUNTRY HOME

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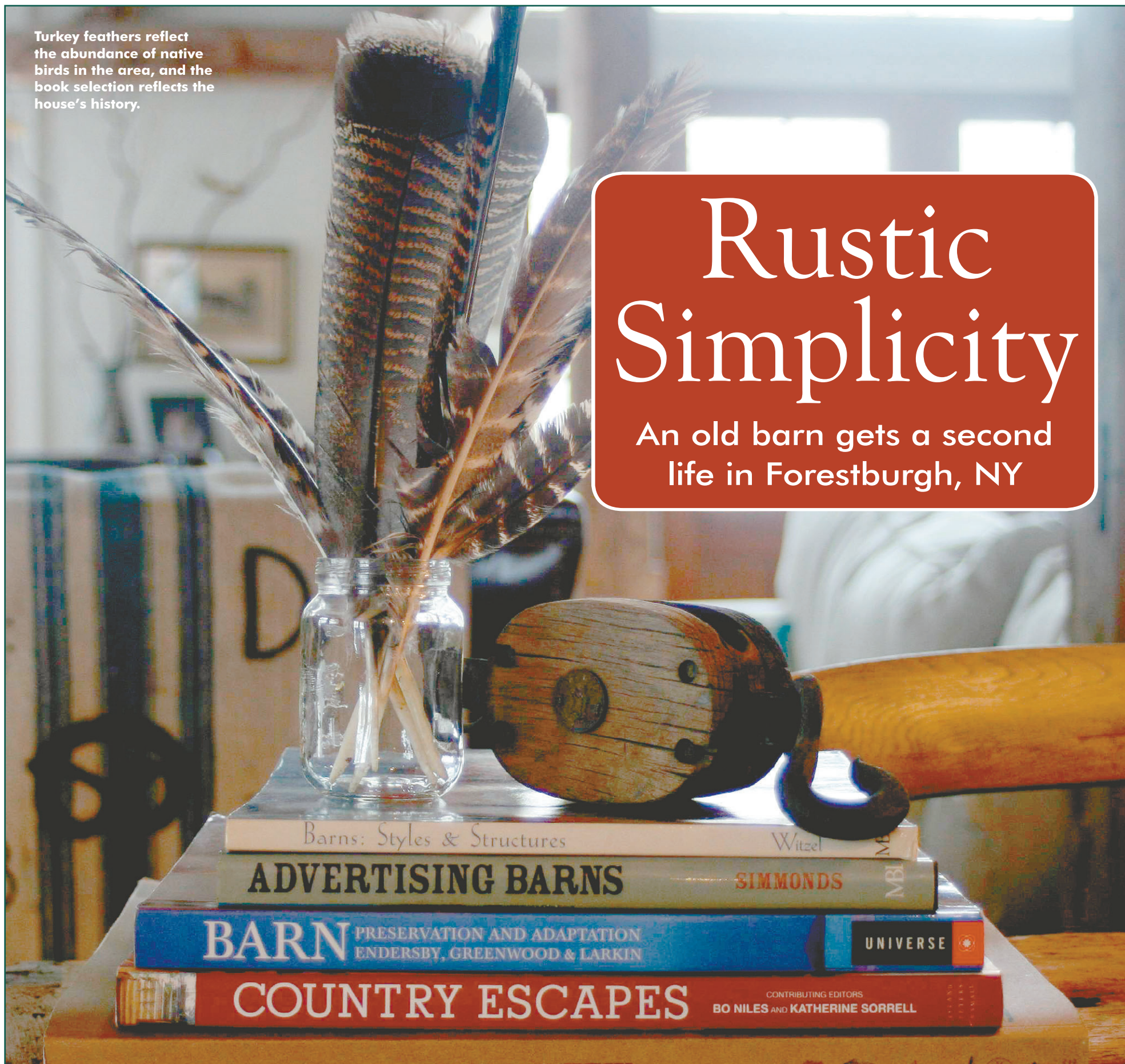
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Turkey feathers reflect the abundance of native birds in the area, and the book selection reflects the house's history.

# Rustic Simplicity

An old barn gets a second  
life in Forestburgh, NY



Text by **Erin Vanderberg** | Photographs contributed by homeowner

When it was first constructed in Bethel, ME circa 1830, it was a drafty English-style dairy barn that housed a herd of cattle. In its second incarnation, circa 2007, it was converted to a custom-built home overlooking the Swinging Bridge Reservoir in Forestburgh, NY. The home belongs to Jon and Jane Wesley, who lovingly renovated the space with wood, light, color and local antiques.

The project took the coordinated efforts of three top-notch industry men: plans by architect Michael Chojnicki, post and beam dis- and re-mantling by timber framer Scott Campbell and construction by contrac-

tor Terry Tenbus to put it all together; combined, of course, with the vision of the Wesleys. In addition to their full-time jobs and undertaking the house project, the young couple found out a month after they broke ground in November of 2007 that they were expecting a child. For Jane, who at that time worked as the art director in the advertisement department of **Vanity Fair**, it was just another deadline. Meanwhile Jon, who works as a commodities broker on Wall Street, kept the checkbook handy.

"We thought having the bones would make it easier for the carpenters—giving them a structure," says Jane.

But as the Wesleys quickly learned, building off a pre-existing structure, especially one so old, is no shortcut. "There aren't a lot of right angles in here," Jane explains.

Jane agonized over the colors of the house. "I put a lot of pressure on myself because color is my job," she says. "I told myself I had to love the colors." (Jane is now a stay-at-home mother with William, age one, but she does do occasional freelance design work.) She chose a creamy light brown color called "truffle" for the appliances and, she says, "My friends joked that it would be the new avocado." The kitchen cabinets mimic that

*continued on page 5*

AFTER



The timbers are left exposed with pegs rather than nails to hold them together.

BEFORE



“Visit the Wesley home on a Sunday morning and you’ll be met with cartoons to a Zydeco soundtrack and a cup of dark, french-pressed, locally roasted coffee with warm milk.”

AFTER

color with Benjamin Moore's "Briarwood." Wood is the motif: oak timbers, hemlock cabinets, pine doors from a former gilded-age hotel in Callicoon, NY (some with the numbers still on them, by design) framed to fit the structure by Tenbus Construction. For touches like these, "Terry has a place in my heart," says Jane. Their furniture is spare, but carefully chosen, like the dining room table crafted from original dairy barn floorboards by local wood worker Matt Hubert.

Against this backdrop are artfully chosen accents—vintage signs, flour sack pillows, a collection of rug beaters, eagle feathers and lots of books. All things "farm" and "dairy" are welcome to apply.

"We've had a fun time decorating. It's been our dollhouse," says Jon. Through their quest for furniture and objects d'art, they have learned the lay of the land, from the Country Bum'Kin in Mongaup Valley, NY to Global Home in Jeffersonville, NY and to Nest in Narrowsburg, NY. Their quest has also taken them to the eBay auction block. "eBay is well represented here," quips Jon. Grandpa Wesley has added to the collection with a homemade toy chest painted like a barn, a family heirloom. The master suite sits aloft and, apart from the staircase and hall bookcases, is the main event upstairs. Open the large sliding doors and you have a sweeping view of trees basking in the sunny light from the central cupola windows which, by the way, open on remote.

Then there are the outdoor spaces: a balcony off the master bedroom; a screened-in back deck that is more aptly called an outdoor living room, complete with fireplace; a front wrap-around stone patio; and a covered patio that you can reach from the basement level that features an outdoor shower, covered wood pile and porch swing to come.

The basement is the classic American den with all the accoutrements: a bar with concert posters; the man cave (where a kegerator lives a full life, generally speaking, though it had unfortunately run dry for my visit); a large laundry room with plenty of counter and closet space; and two cozy guest rooms with a shared bath. There is also the potential for a future wine cellar in a completely subterranean room.

The Wesleys built the house as a place where the family can gather and, with children and friends, make memories. Jon says it is his memories of growing up in Wisconsin on a lake that "percolated this whole idea." Soon, the couple hopes to build a dock and take advantage of their access to the reservoir. Jane, who hails from New Orleans, grew up in an old and drafty house and wanted to recreate that old-world feel in her new home. They've brought those visions together to make a dream home—accessible, elemental, elegant and made for living.

During the week, the couple maintains a home in Manhattan. "Come Friday, we're scratching at the doors to get back up here," says Jane. They still have work to do, and they are looking forward to it. It's a house that was built for family fun. As Jon puts it: "If kids can't have a good time up here, then shame on them."



"It's real important to me not to have rooms to-go, but to have more of a collection of things. If it's furnished in five years, or eight years, that'll be good."

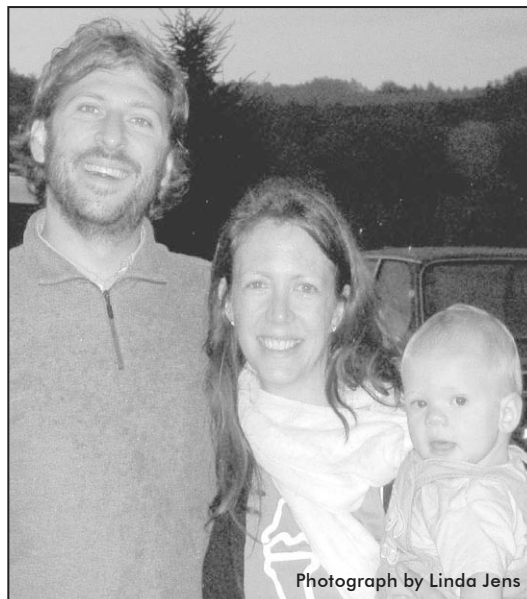
— Homeowner Jane Wesley



Details such as pillows, figurines and lamps warm up and personalize the space.



This mirror in the half bath was one of the first decorative purchases made by the couple for their upstate home.



Photograph by Linda Jens

Jon, Jane and William Wesley at William's first concert: Willie Nelson at Bethel Woods Center for the Arts in Bethel, NY.



**ON THE COVER**

The Wesley abode from the outside is a visual feast of details like the modern doors that are framed into the old barn doors.



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# 4 Simple Ways to Re-invent Your Space

*Declutter | Paint | Accessorize | Rearrange*

Text by **Lori Malone** | Photographs from **TRR** archives



## Declutter

Decluttering your home is the first step in reinventing your space. Bookcases, entry furniture and mantles tend to bear the evidence of our hoarding nature. Flat surfaces often become littered with magazines, books, bills, remote controls and paper. Exposed wires from entertainment systems, chargers, phones and small appliances also contribute a sense of chaos in a room.

Decluttering your space by employing storage containers and organizational gadgets will put the focus on your room's design style and not your bad habits.

### Getting started

Tackle one room at a time to prevent becoming overwhelmed. If the room is large or very cluttered, you may want to tackle it in sections. Start by using large boxes or trash bags and create three zones: zone one is for items you would like to keep, zone 2 is for items you want to throw away and zone three is for items you would like to donate.

Once your room's objects are categorized, remove them from the space and clean thoroughly. As you start bringing things back in, be discerning. Electronics should be put in place first. Use cord organizers to keep them under control. Next, replace large bins, large accessories and books. Be creative when filling in bookcases. Don't just line books up vertically; lay some books horizontally and use small decorative objects on top of small stacks. Put decorative bins, file holders and baskets in place, assigning each one a purpose. Remote controls, batteries, gaming equipment and so on can be placed in one bin. Toys, blankets, DVDs and CDs should have their own storage containers.



There are an array of affordably priced, decorative storage solutions on the market. Find a motif or color that complements your space. You may want to label some bins for ease of use.



Gadgets like this phone charger, placed in an inconspicuous location, helps keep your phone off entry hall furniture and reminds you to charge it.

continued on page 9

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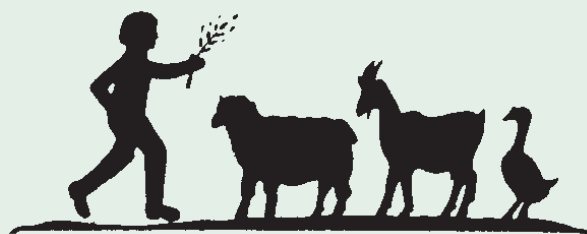
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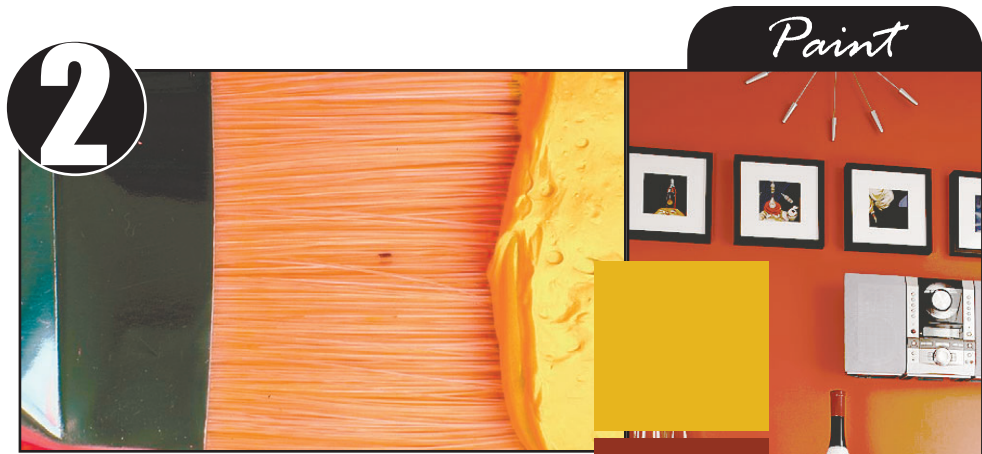
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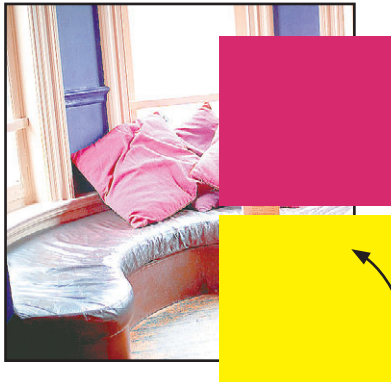
Painting a room can change the mood of your space without breaking the bank. If painting an entire room is too great a task, try painting an accent wall or the inside of a bookcase to create depth and interest. Keep in mind the room's use and style, as well as the desired ambiance.

### Accenting with BOLD Color

Bold colors add energy and visual impact to a room. Rich and vibrant colors are great in family rooms, kitchens, kids' rooms and dining rooms. Sunny citrus shades in a kitchen evoke a fresh, upbeat environment; deeper tones create drama and richness in living and dining rooms. If you have stained trim, hold swatches up to the trim to see what colors coordinate with the natural wood tone. Reds and yellows often complement deep wood tones, while greens and blues tend to work well with lighter wood tones.



This spice-colored wall creates drama and richness in this kitchen. Coordinating shades include chocolate browns and deep golden yellows.



If you want bright and impactful, try accenting a room, bookcase or alcove with purple, watermelon or citrus yellow. These vibrant hues are fun and trendy and work well with many design schemes.

### Accenting with NEUTRALS

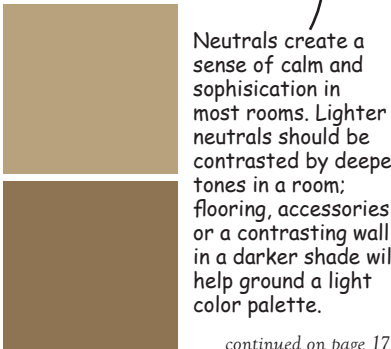
Neutral shades are great for dens, bedrooms and formal spaces. Neutrals are no longer relegated to boring beige. Neutral palettes in both warm and cool tones lend themselves to a modern, monochromatic look, and instantly update a room. Linen walls offset by a charcoal gray or chocolate brown are ideal for complementing architectural details like nooks and alcoves.

### Tips for selecting paint color:

First, consider the existing wall color. Then establish what you want your accent color to achieve. If your walls are neutral and you want to add a splash of color, look at the patterns in your room. Your accent color should be taken from the palette found in your primary pattern. If your walls are already painted a bold color, you want to be sure your accent color is complementary to that existing color. Rust and mustard, lemon yellow and lime green and light and dark shades of the same color make lovely combinations.

Remember that color can be tricky; a shade that looks great in your favorite restaurant may not look the same in your living room. Many paint companies offer sample size paint that allows you to test the color(s) on your walls. You can also paint a board and move it around to see how the color looks in different areas of the room. Live with the swatch(es) for a while and notice how it looks in both natural daylight and ambient/incandescent lighting.

Taking the time to tape off molding and trim, patching wall blemishes and using quality brushes and rollers will ensure a professional application.



Neutrals create a sense of calm and sophistication in most rooms. Lighter neutrals should be contrasted by deeper tones in a room; flooring, accessories or a contrasting wall in a darker shade will help ground a light color palette.

continued on page 17

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# Beach Lake Bread & Flour Power

Local quality, local flavor



Beach Lake Bread owner Jennifer Hason is ready for business in her Honesdale, PA shop.



Flour Power co-owner J.R. Rowley displays two varieties of a house specialty, fresh Tarte Tatin.



A signature flower motif cake from Flour Power Bakery.

Text and Photographs by **Nancy Dymond**

It is February, the month when warmth is needed and Valentine's Day sweetness abounds. What better time to get to know your local bakeries? We present two successful businesses that offer a variety of wholesome and delicious pastries and breads for your enjoyment.

## Beach Lake Bread: Fashioned to your taste

How does a successful Manhattan fashion designer reinvent herself as the proprietor of a flourishing bakery? If you ask Jennifer Hason, the personable owner of **Beach Lake Bread** on 198 Delaware Street in Honesdale, PA (570/253-8055, [www.beachlakebread.com](http://www.beachlakebread.com)), she will tell you it's a complex recipe that begins with a tiny crumb of dissatisfaction and one hugely adventurous spirit. Combine five months of round-the-clock training with hundreds of loaves of artisan breads emerging warm from the oven. Finally, add the secret ingredients of encouragement and support from the local community and sit back to enjoy the enticing wares that emerge from the Beach Lake Bread's bakeshop.

Already established as a fashion designer and a member of the faculty at Parsons School of Design in New York City, Jennifer felt a call to do something different. Swayed by enthusiastic reports of good friends Will Geisler and Grady Avant, who had already made the move from urban New York and now operate successful businesses in Narrowsburg, NY, she bought a house in Jeffersonville, NY and continued to teach. When Jennifer learned that Beach Lake Bread was for sale, she arranged with the owners to attend their 3:00 a.m. bake.

Subsequent talks resulted in Jennifer's commitment to buy the business.

Jennifer worked as an apprentice at Beach Lake Bread for months, immersing herself in the study of bread. "I just totally focused my life on bread. I read about bread, ate bread, watched educational movies on bread, read cookbooks. I was constantly studying and I learned it well."

In August 2007, Jennifer took control of the bakery that was started by Brian and Lisa Woods inside a 1,100-square-foot barn in Beach Lake, PA. She wanted to grow the business while maintaining the integrity of the product with the philosophy that Lisa and Brian had established: "It's about the grain. It's about the bread. It's about the fermentation. It's not about any fancy additives."

Jennifer hired more employees and baked around the clock, accepting the new accounts that were calling every day. Jennifer takes pride in the hundred percent growth in sales since she took over the business, seventy percent of that in the first seven months. She says that the phenomenal growth occurred because she allowed her attitude to change. "I just stopped saying no," she said. Sooner than it had planned, the bakery had to search for larger quarters.

The move to the 5,000-square-foot facility came just as the recession hit. Some of the business accounts pulled back, but new accounts came calling and the Borough of Honesdale, which has enjoyed an influx of new businesses, welcomed Beach Lake Bread. "The support we have gotten from the local people is unbelievable, and we are beyond thankful for that," says Jennifer. She also

gives credit to the Delaware Valley Job Corps, a federally funded training program for students that not only cuts costs for the business, but puts her back in the role of teacher, which she thoroughly enjoys.

In Beach Lake Bread's bake shop, customers can find tempting artisan breads and delicious bread spreads as well as multiple varieties of pies, cookies, muffins and pastries, and 48 varieties of soup. Jennifer's tasty bread spreads are all original. Flavors include roasted mushroom bruschetta, caramelized onion, kalamata olive tapenade and hummus. They also carry tuna and chicken salad. "We don't use any additives or preservatives," Jennifer says. "Preservatives weigh down a flavor."

The facilities at Beach Lake Bread include three four-deck convection/steam ovens for heavy crusted breads. Pies, cookies, baguettes, loaves and pastries are baked in the double rotating rack oven. Jennifer hopes to increase the reach of Beach Lake Bread's products beyond the dozens of regional grocery stores and restaurants they currently supply. Future plans include producing three varieties of their bread frozen in mass quantities to ship nationally.

Look for Beach Lake Bread products in local supermarkets and gourmet food stores, or visit the shop in Honesdale. Hours: Tuesday through Friday 9:00 am until 4:30 pm and Saturday 9:00 am until 4:00 pm.

## Flour Power Bakery: The sweet business of tarts and tortes

Awash in a day-glo palette of peace and love, the decor of the **Flour Power Bakery** on DeBruce Road in

Livingston Manor (917/747-6895, [www.flourpowerbakery.net](http://www.flourpowerbakery.net)) reprises the happy mood of the mod 1960s. Take two steps inside and the sensual aromas of baking bread and pastries warming for customers waft and mingle in the sun-drenched shop and cafe. Proprietors J.R. Rowley and his wife Denise have created a unique space in which to practice their exquisite craft, which is part baking, part decorating, part socializing and part business.

A Parisian by birth, J.R. Rowley left home in 1977 and landed in Manhattan to seek his version of the American Dream. Because he was French, he felt it was natural to look for work related to cooking and baking. "If you are French, you cook!" he says, smiling broadly. Trying on different hats, J.R. cooked for Le Bec Fin, worked at two city bakeries and earned a living for a time as a maitre d'. His interest in food took a new twist when he met Denise, who was working as a prop stylist. Denise brought him along to a photo shoot of food and J.R. traded hats once again, embracing a career as a food stylist.

For years, the couple balanced commuting from their work in the city to the country home they have owned for 25 years. But after 9-11, things changed. "A lot of our clients moved out of the city and there was less work there," recalls J.R. "We were not sure of the future. Then I woke up one day and said, 'I think I'm going to do cookies!'" J.R.'s spontaneous idea of baking cookies and selling them at local farmers markets succeeded so well that eventually the pair was able to make a full-time move to the country. Leasing local kitchen facilities, they ramped up their output and were soon selling bread and pastries as well as cookies at five farmers markets. "Summer is our busiest season," J.R. notes. "Farmers markets are a big draw in the 'shop local' movement. People like to buy from the local farmers, artisan bakers and cheese makers rather than shopping in the big box stores."

Denise's discovery of the building they first leased and now own, which formerly housed a restaurant and then a resort, was the natural next step for Flour Power. There is an air-conditioned pastry room where they ganache the cakes, cool the cookies and work with the creams that need a colder environment. At the head of a colorful staircase is a large room that can be rented for small parties and special events with catering provided by Flour Power. The bakery offers call-ahead orders on rolls, bread, pastries and special-occasion cakes. The busy kitchen has a schedule of "bakes" to accommodate each product's particular needs. J.R. summarized the process. "Baking bread starts at 3:00 a.m., Danish and pastries at 5:00 a.m., then cookies. Tarte tatin is the last thing I do because you have to pay attention. I have six tarts going at the same time. You have to be right there because the caramel can burn in seconds."

At the Flour Power cafe, where local artists' works hang on display, customers can sample seasonal soups, savory bread pudding or quiche for lunch. For dessert there's an infinite variety of luscious sounding treats: chocolate mousse cake, fresh berry tarts, fruit clafouti, pecan torte, even J.R.'s grandmother's secret-recipe almond cakes. And don't forget to take home several loaves of hearty breads or a tarte tatin, an upside-down fruit tart. Flour Power dessert products are, in the European tradition, less sweet. "You want the flavor of the fruit, the almonds," J.R. says. "You don't want to overpower with sugar and kill the good flavor that's in there already."

Look for Flour Power Bakery products at local farmers markets when the season commences and, in the meantime, get thee up to the Manor for a visit to the cafe. Winter hours: Saturday 9:00 am until 4:00 pm and Sunday 9:00 am until 2:00 pm.

## Shop Local

Local bakeries abound in the Upper Delaware River Valley. In addition to our featured bakeries, here are others to indulge your sweet tooth and your desire for artisan bread products.

**Day's Bakery**  
1235 Main Street  
Honesdale, PA 18431  
570/253-1660

**Sweet Eden**  
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570/253-1028

**Branko's Patisserie du Jour**  
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**The Alpine Bakery - Honesdale**  
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# Take-Out Favorites Made Healthier at Home

Text & Photographs by **Clarrisa Chatley**

At the end of a busy day, who doesn't love the treat of take-out food? It's fast, convenient and tasty, and makes family dinner a snap. However, take-out food can get expensive, and it does not always provide the healthiest menu for you and your family. So, join me on a tour of some of my favorite ethnic "take-out" dishes that you can make at home.

Not only do you get to cook dishes from your favorite

cuisine, you can become creative in your own kitchen. The recipes that follow do not include measurements. They are not meant to be "followed" but to provide a basic blueprint to let you discover how to create the dish you want. I have found that I generally ignore the suggested amount of, say, garlic: a recipe may call for a teaspoon of garlic, which, for me, is nowhere near enough. Or, a recipe may call for black olives; you may

prefer green. You may love ginger and add lots of it, or you may go for a more subtle effect. You may season with soy sauce rather than salt, or you may like flavored salt or pure sea salt. The idea is to further your culinary skills by following your intuition and taking some risks. Have fun, experiment and create your own signature dishes according to your taste, dietary and portion needs. Try it, you might just like it...it's liberating.

## Gourmet Pizza



Italian

## Chicken & Broccoli



Chinese

Aside from a traditional pie with tomato sauce and mozzarella, I enjoy a "gourmet pizza" from time to time. It's easy and super delicious.

### Ingredients

Pre-made pizza crust (I like to use the personal size pizza crusts so each family member gets their own.)

- Butter
- Mushrooms, sliced
- Fresh garlic, chopped finely
- Spinach
- Leeks, finely sliced
- Thyme
- Cheese, shredded
- Salt and pepper

Melt some butter in a pan, add garlic and sauté (don't brown). Toss in leeks and sauté (don't brown). Toss in spinach and mushrooms; cook until tender.

Add thyme, salt and pepper.

Spoon mixture over crust; sprinkle shredded cheese on and pop in a pre-heated 350 degree oven until cheese is melted. Serve with a side salad.

Yes, I do crave General Tso's Chicken and a pork egg roll, but my waistline and health don't agree. Try my palette-pleasing version of Chicken & Broccoli.

### Ingredients

- Boneless, skinless chicken breast
- Broccoli, cut into bite size florets
- Garlic
- Ginger
- Soy sauce
- Peanut oil
- Sesame oil
- Brown rice

Start by preparing your brown rice. Cook accordingly and set to the side.

Chop garlic and ginger into fine pieces and set to the side.

Cut chicken into thin strips or bite-sized chunks.

Toss chicken, garlic, ginger, soy sauce, peanut oil and sesame oil into a bowl. Coat the chicken and let it marinate. The longer the chicken marinates, the more flavorful it will be. I like to prepare this the day before and let it sit in the refrigerator overnight.

Prepare broccoli by cutting into bite-sized florets and pieces.

Prepare a large pot of salted water and bring to a boil. Add broccoli and allow it to boil about 3-5 minutes (broccoli should be crisp & deep green). Strain and rinse with cold water. Set to the side.

In a large skillet, wok or pot, toss your marinated chicken and all the juices and cook over medium to high heat until chicken is cooked all the way through.

Toss in your broccoli and combine until all the flavors merge.

Add some soy sauce to your brown rice (just enough to give the rice a little flavor).

Plate the brown rice and add your chicken and broccoli.

### Variations

Substitute shrimp or beef for the chicken. Don't like broccoli? Try bok choy, asparagus,

TIP

**Our Country Home** has made saving and organizing our recipes easier. Simply snip out each recipe and fold at the dotted line. Then accordion fold the balance behind the recipe photo. They can also be mounted to standard index cards for durability and saved in index file boxes.



Snip and save!

Continued on page 15

## Taco Bar & Mexican Quinoa Salad



Mexican

All I have to say is... YUM! Tacos are one of the easiest dishes you can make, and can be custom-made to the individual tastes around your table.

### Taco Bar

- Ground turkey or beef
- Refried beans
- Taco seasoning (salt, pepper, cumin, chili powder etc. Use prepackaged seasonings or create your own.)
- Taco shells
- Diced onion
- Shredded lettuce
- Black olives, sliced
- Sour cream
- Shredded cheese (I like to shred cheese from Calkins Creamery)
- Homemade Simple Guacamole (see recipe below)
- Homemade Fresh Salsa (see recipe below)

Brown turkey or beef and drain any excess grease, or warm beans. Add in taco seasoning (or perhaps you'd like to add salsa instead; have fun, mix it up).

Assemble your taco to your liking.

### Simple Guacamole

- Avocados
- Fresh lime juice
- Garlic
- Fresh cilantro
- Salt & pepper to taste

Cut avocado into chunks; toss in finely chopped fresh garlic and cilantro. Squeeze in some lime juice and mash up really well. Add salt and pepper to taste.

### Fresh Salsa

- Diced fresh or canned tomatoes, including juice
  - Red onion, diced
  - Fresh cilantro
  - Chopped green chili or jalapeño peppers
  - Lime juice
  - Salt & pepper to taste
- Combine all ingredients and season according to taste, reserving some for your Mexican Quinoa Salad.

### Mexican Quinoa Salad

- Cooked quinoa, chilled
- Fresh Salsa (recipe above)
- Avocado, diced
- Chipotle, finely chopped
- Salt and pepper to taste

Combine chilled quinoa with enough salsa to make it wet (not soupy). Dice some avocado and add in along with chipotle.

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Accessorize



Accessories bring rooms together. Pictures, figurines, pottery, books, pillows and draperies define the space they adorn. Changing the look of a room can be as simple as adding wall art or new pillows in a bold color.

To update your space, replace dated accessories with more current trends. Instead of a silk or dried flower arrangement on the center of your dining room table, try a row or grouping of clear cylinder vases filled with natural elements like acorns, stones or twigs. Wrap worn books with craft paper and place in neat stacks in a bookcase or on a shelf. Replace your current wall art with black and white photographs hung gallery style on a sofa wall or in an entry hall. Group like objects together to create a more dynamic display. Lighting also can enhance a room. Make sure your room has enough light by adding lamps in dark areas and dimmer switches to overhead lighting to control the ambiance.



Grouping similar objects, like this collection of pottery, creates a more dynamic display than single objects would.



A richly colored duvet cover, sheets and pillows instantly transform this bedroom.



Replacing dated fixtures and shades can give your space an updated look.



Also remember to add lamps in dark corners and use wireless picture lights to make artwork pop.

continued on page 19

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Rearrange

4



Rearranging your furniture is one of the best way to reinvent your space. Begin by clearing smaller pieces out of the room and then arrange the larger pieces. Use casters and dollies to prevent injury to yourself and damage to your furniture.

Once you have positioned the larger pieces, bring the smaller pieces back in. If your room size can accommodate it, pull your furniture away from the walls or try placing some pieces at an angle. Try swapping an accent chair and end table with ones from another rooms to give the space a "new" feeling. Be sure that foot traffic isn't compromised and that doorways and windows aren't blocked by furniture. Seating is also a priority; make sure that chairs and sofas are grouped closely enough to allow for conversation.

The furniture arrangement of this family room is ideal. The large bookcase balances the fire place and the angled seating creates interest and allows for conversation and enjoyment of the fireplace.



Furnishings borrowed from other rooms create an eclectic style that gives rooms a sense of being decorated over time.



You can also use grid paper to draw a floor plan estimating a foot for each square. Measure your large furnishings and create cutouts to scale then arrange them on the grid.

Taking action

At the very least, following these suggestions will allow you to clear the dust bunnies from behind your furniture and perhaps find some spare change. However, taking action and following through will undoubtedly lift your spirits, pull you out of a rut, spark your creativity and encourage you to entertain more often. Don't just pine for a lovely home, make yours all it can be.

Vintage stools, hat boxes, stacked luggage and steamer trunks make great retro-style tables.



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# Happy Knitting

Text by **Marcia Nehemiah** | Photograph from **TRR** archives

Jill Deal learned how to knit as a child. She describes her teacher as “a gentle perfectionist” who taught her to present her best in everything that she did. After a successful career in banking, in 1989 Jill became president and owner of Laurel Grove Greenhouses in Port Jervis, NY, which she sold in 2000. Then she taught elementary education, first at the Homestead School in Glen Spey, NY and then in the Port Jervis and Minisink, NY school districts until she opened jill deal, inc. in 2004. Located in Milford, PA’s turn-of-the-century Forest Hall, jill deal, inc. is a source for high quality and hard-to-obtain knitting and crocheting supplies. Also available are a wide array of books, needlepoint canvases and supplies, and rug-hooking materials.

**Our Country Home** had the opportunity to speak with Jill about her love of knitting and why she likes to help others learn to knit.

**OCH: Why would you encourage people to start knitting?**

**JD:** Not only is knitting a continuation of an art form that is many hundreds of years old, it can be a bonding experience when done with a family member and it’s a wonderfully productive use of what might otherwise be unproductive time. It allows an expression of creativity and now, according to the Mayo Clinic, handwork such as knitting and crocheting has been found to have some very positive healthful consequences. Most often my customers describe their handwork as “relaxing.”

**OCH: What skills are required for a person to be a successful knitter?**

**JD:** Like anything else, desire, really. Knitting is about repetitive motion and basic sequencing skills that we all learned in Kindergarten, which is perhaps why children can pick this up so quickly.

**OCH: What are some ways to learn the craft? What is the best way?**

**JD:** We all learn differently—some folks can pick things up from a book, while others are better taught through visual medium. It’s been my experience that the visual is more effective as there are some “wrong ways” to do some of the knitting techniques and sometimes written instructions can be left to subjective interpretation.

**OCH: What supplies does the beginning knitter need to get started? What would be the cost of these materials?**

**JD:** Getting started is easy. You need a pair of knitting needles and a ball of yarn, so for about ten dollars you’re ready to get started. Never start with metal needles, and beginning with wool can allow better control for the beginning knitter. We all have metal needles that have been passed down through the family—hold on to them, they are treasures, but they’re not the best pick for a beginner. It’s better to use a polymer or wood needle to begin; you’ll just find that you have better overall control and hopefully a more pleasurable, less frustrating experience.

**OCH: What are the basic techniques a new knitter needs to learn?**

**JD:** Here’s the best part about knitting—there are only two stitches, the knit and purl—and one is a default of the other. All the fancy patterning that you see is merely a manipulation of the knit and purl. After the two stitches are learned and basic sequencing is mastered, the possibilities for your projects become limited only by your willingness.

**OCH: What kinds of projects can the beginner undertake?**

**JD:** Scarves are at the top of this list since they allow movement of

the yarn with ease, and also allow the knitter to gauge progress by maintaining proper stitch count and stitch consistency. But scarves need not be boring since the yarns are so inviting, and embellishing the edges of scarves can allow any ordinary scarf to become a fashion statement. After scarves, simple circular knitting with a hat can be fun, but generally I take my students to an afghan sampler to amplify skills already learned and further technique.

**OCH: What problems, if any, might a beginning knitter encounter? How are they best solved?**

**JD:** One basic problem is increasing stitches without knowing why, and suddenly holes appear out of thin air. Dropped stitches are also problematic when the relationship between the yarn and the needle is out of sync, such as using metal needles with a “slippery” yarn. That’s why, I think, having a mentor is a great way of learning slowly and properly.

**OCH: As a knitter advances, what new techniques can be learned?**

**JD:** Knitting “shorthand” can be challenging, and the more that you work with it, the more familiar it becomes—techniques such as ssk (slip, slip, knit), pss0 (pass slipped stitch over) and ktbl (knit through back loop), to name a few, are merely manipulations of the knit and purl stitch, but these manipulations are the things that give us really beautiful patterning that goes from fun to interesting to elegant.

There is also a whole area of knitting dedicated specifically to finishing techniques. Putting knitted pieces together is not like basting a seam on a skirt. Professional seaming and embellishing techniques only amplify the satisfaction that comes from being a great knitter and loving what you ultimately create. Many knitters are great knitters but don’t fully understand the process required for a really successful and satisfying finishing. And truthfully, in many cases, the finishing can take as much time as working the garment itself, but then what a real work of art you have! I think this is when you have really arrived as a knitter.

**OCH: Are there specific types of yarn that a new knitter should use?**

**JD:** Wool...wool...wool...reliable, stable and with memory that can help to camouflage some beginner mistakes, but more importantly, it’s not slippery, has a great “hand,” meaning it feels nice running through your fingers and, for where we live, it is warm.

**OCH: How would you encourage someone who is reluctant to start knitting, thinking that it’s too complicated?**

**JD:** I’ll simply say this: we can truthfully do anything that we set our minds to. Folks begin to knit for lots of reasons. It keeps the hands busy if you’re recently retired, trying to quit smoking or want help with your Weight Watchers program. Remembering, though, that the skills required to knit are basic fine-motor skills that you’ve learned by first grade and basic sequencing skills learned in kindergarten, there’s no excuse for not giving it a try. That having been said, perhaps knitting is not for you, but there’s always crochet, needlepoint, cross stitch, rug-hooking and other hand crafts that can provide the same therapeutic and comforting results, and then there’s the joy of seeing friends and family members “ooh” and “aah” over the fruits of your labors. I think that makes it all worth it.

Happy knitting!



Here are some area knitting circles and groups that will help you get started or provide company for the experienced knitter.

#### **Sit and Knit**

Tusten-Cochecton Branch of the Western Sullivan Public Library  
Bridge Street, Narrowsburg, NY  
845/252-3360  
Monday, 6:00 to 8:00 pm

#### **Friday Night Knits**

jill deal, inc.  
200 Broad Street, Milford, PA  
570/409-YARN (9276)  
4:00 to 7:00 pm every other Friday through the winter.

#### **4 Corners for Artful Living**

22 Main Street  
Narrowsburg, NY  
845/252-3688  
Sunday, 1:00 to 3:00 pm Bring a project you are working on, and exchange helpful hints with other knitters. Coffee served.

#### **Knit One, Needlepoint Too**

246 East Broadway  
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845/791-KNIT (5648) or 800/791-5650  
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Built in 1810, the old farmhouse that now houses the Old Stone House Gallery boasts two-foot-thick stone walls.

# Rich in History, Beauty and Art

## *The Old Stone House gallery and center*

Text and Photograph by **Jonathan Fox**

At the confluence of the Wnycoop Brook and the Neversink River, up on a knoll, sits the historic **Old Stone House** (282 Hasbrouck Road, Hasbrouck, NY, [www.oldstonehouse.catskill-life.com](http://www.oldstonehouse.catskill-life.com), 845/436-7720). This building, converted now to a gallery, holds a vividly rich history, dating back to 1810 and encompassing many incarnations. The only remaining structure from the early days of Hasbrouck's settlement, the two-foot-thick stone walls have lots of stories to tell. Repeated visits are a must, if one wants to learn all that the walls—and what they contain—have to say.

### **Scandal, skullduggery and murder**

Scandal, skullduggery, family feuds and mayhem were apparently no stranger to the house during the 1800s. The Old Stone House was even the site of the 1840 murder of prominent Hasbrouck founding father Anthony Hasbrouck, who was active in local politics and the New York State assembly. His killer was Cornelius Hardenburgh, a descendant of the "Great Land Grant" in the Catskills. Hardenburgh became desperate and deranged after squandering his money, and fell into a dispute with Hasbrouck over a mill ownership and some county land. The day before the murder, Hardenburgh purchased a pistol and a Bowie knife in Liberty. He went to the Old Stone House and killed Hasbrouck while his wife and grandchild were present. Hardenburgh later hanged for his crime.

### **Restoration efforts**

More recent history has included a beautiful restoration of the historic structure.

The house and its grounds (20 acres) were purchased in 1977 by the Concerned Citizens of Hasbrouck (CCOH). The CCOH, a grassroots group that had been formed the year before, worked on restoring the house with the intent that it be turned into a historical center to house regional artifacts, such as farm tools.

Volunteers from all walks of life have helped restore and transform the old house into the magnificent building that it is today. Much of the more recent plumbing and electrical work was done by inmates of the Ulster Correctional Facility in Ulster County, NY as part of skills enhancement program.

While there is still much to be done, the place is approaching its former glory and scores of volunteers, local construction companies, engineers and artisans have all lent a helping hand. The Old Stone House is a beautiful illustration of what can occur when a community comes together for the common good.

### **For the people, by the people**

Known in the region as the gallery "for the people, by the people," this community center and regional arts gallery is dependent on donations from the private sector, while awaiting the coveted not-for-profit status. Meanwhile, the Old Stone House hosts a variety of classes, art shows and events during the year. The 2009 season was

the most successful one so far and the gallery had new shows monthly starting last April. Becoming a part of the 2009 "Art a la Carte" events program brought scores of new visitors to the space, and 2010 looks bright, in spite of the difficult financial times that has hit every sector of the arts.

Old Stone House board member and gallery coordinator Constance Slater characterizes the space this way: "It is like an oasis in the desert. We provide a space for the community to use for various activities, a space for artists to hold classes in painting and in pottery making, and we provide gallery space for those artists in the community who wish to have a showing of their work."

Children are included as well, in activities such as karate classes. Says Slater, "We attempt to do seasonal celebrations like 'breakfast with Santa.'"

The Old Stone House needs the community as much as the community needs it. "We are supported strictly by donations," Slater says, "and we do fund raising events to raise that money such as bake sales, duck races down the river and so on."

The beautiful setting, the lessons in clay, painting and watercolor, cultural events, private parties and the ever changing display of local artists' work are but a few of the appealing factors that make the Old Stone House a destination to be visited time and time again. Its own literature elegantly simplifies its mission by stating: "There's always something going on at the Old Stone House. Come visit and you'll see for yourself."

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**Directions:** Our Market is located in the beautiful Catskill Mountain region of New York State, approximately 2 hours from New York City, and less than an hour from North-east Pennsylvania.

From lower NY State, take NY Route 17 (future Interstate 86) to exit 100, Liberty. Follow signs for Route 52 west. Take Route 52 west through the village of Liberty. The market is located approximately 1 mile outside the village on the right, immediately following the intersection of Route 52 and Ferndale-Loomis Road.

From Northeast Pennsylvania, cross the Delaware River to NY Route 97. Take Route 97 to NY Route 52. Follow Route 52 east for approximately 30 miles. The market is located just before you reach the village of Liberty on the left, just before Route 52 intersects with Ferndale-Loomis Road.