

# Town & Country

# TRAVEL

FALL 2008

## THE OTHER CHINA

**PLUS**  
COPENHAGEN:  
DESIGNED  
FOR LIVING

**NEW YORK'S  
HUDSON  
RIVER VALLEY  
REVIVAL**

**ACCESSIBLE  
EASTER ISLAND**



# A River Runs Through It

The Hudson Valley has gone in and out of fashion through the centuries. But a thoughtful generation of organic-food devotees, antiques lovers and city slickers escaping the rat race of Manhattan has given the counties along the fabled river a new lease on life. BY BRYAN MILLER

*Photographs by Francesco Lagnese*

## A RIVER RUNS THROUGH IT

Simeon Deputy Tavern, his first culinary venture, with modest aspirations—that is, until the famed *New York Times* restaurant critic Craig Claiborne came calling one evening with eight friends in tow. Two weeks later, the fledgling dining spot in the middle of nowhere was awarded four stars, the highest rating. More than a quarter century on, it endures as a vibrant original.

Nearby New Paltz attracts city folk not only for its food and spectacular rock climbing but also for the **Mohonk Mountain House**, one of the valley's great man-made wonders. It's a six-story, 265-room stack of timber and stone hanging precariously over crystalline Mohonk Lake. Surrounded by 2,200 private acres of the Appalachians' Shawangunk Mountains, Mohonk is among the last of the grand 19th-century resorts; you half expect Teddy Roosevelt to strut out of the lounge and plunge into the chilly water. That said, it has changed much since my last visit, in the mid-1980s. Back then, when my wife and I arrived, on Christmas Eve, the overheated lodge was largely inhabited by nostalgic senior citizens, some of whom had been coming since the Eisenhower administration. We smuggled a bottle of wine into the puritanical dining room to enjoy with the bland meat-and-potatoes dinner. At 8 P.M. there wasn't a whole lot to do, and we were asleep by nine.

These days Mohonk's marvelous year-round spa draws sophisticated visitors from around the country. The spiffed-up rooms remain, quaintly, sans telephones. The menu now carries dishes like marinated mahimahi with orange-cumin salsa, and the wine list has received an award from the *Wine Spectator*.

I continue to explore the Hudson Valley year-round—although it doesn't get any better than in October—and like that of someone who watches *Gone With the Wind* again and again, my ardor is undiminished with repetition. Each viewing reveals something new.

Thomas Cole, the 19th-century landscape artist and resident of Catskill, observed that “the river scenery of the United States is a rich and boundless theme. The Hudson, for natural magnificence, is unsurpassed.” It's no wonder FDR longed to return. As do I. ❧

## WHEN TO GO

Spring dawdles on its journey north to the Hudson Valley, so the area can be cool until about mid-April. This is a fine time of year to see the historic mansions along the east bank of the river (most are open year-round), as well as visit some of the region's museums and galleries. Summer is the season for: boat trips, hiking, ballooning, music festivals (for a rundown of events, go to [travelhudsonvalley.org](http://travelhudsonvalley.org)) and much more. In autumn, there is no better place for leaf gazing, while a snowbound winter in the Catskills inspires participation in all diversions vertical.

## The East Side

### WHERE TO DRIVE

This is but one possible route: proceed west out of the village of Rhinebeck on Rhinecliff Road (it is unmarked; the road is at a right angle to Route 9 and runs past the Beekman Arms) for a little more than a mile and turn right on River Road (also known as County Road 103). Over the next six miles, River Road, bordered by craggy stone walls for considerable stretches, wends its way past farms and broad fields, grand estates and compact farmhouses. You can keep going until you reach Bard College (it's worth stopping there to see the campus's Frank Gehry-designed performing

arts center), or you can turn east on Route 82, which takes you to Red Hook, Rhinebeck's less polished neighbor to the north.

### WHERE TO STAY

**Beekman Arms** While hardly historic, the modest-sized rooms are tidy and comfortable. *Double rooms from \$125, suites from \$275. 6387 Mill St. (at Rte. 9), Rhinebeck; 845-876-7077; [beekmandelamaterinn.com](http://beekmandelamaterinn.com).*

**Belvedere Mansion** The imposing neoclassical house, overlooking the river three miles south of Rhinebeck, has seven sizable rooms, each laden with antiques. Also on the property are four suites in what is billed as a hunting lodge, ten simple carriage-house rooms and a serene "Zen lodge" that can be reserved for groups of up to ten. *Double rooms from \$225, suites from \$300, carriage-house rooms from \$105, lodge rooms from \$250. 10 Olde Rte. 9, Staatsburg; 845-889-8000; [belvederemansion.com](http://belvederemansion.com).*

**Van Schaack House** Built in 1785 in the Dutch village of Kinderhook, the towering mansion is a harmonious overlapping of architectural styles. *Double rooms from \$150. 20 Broad St., Kinderhook; 518-758-6118; [vanschaackhouse.com](http://vanschaackhouse.com).*

### WHERE TO EAT

**Ca'Mea Ristorante** Expect the elements of a swanky Italian restaurant in SoHo—a long granite bar, a wood-plank floor—but not the pretension. The homemade pasta dishes, like pappardelle with wild-boar ragù, are standouts. *333 Warren St., Hudson; 518-822-0005; [camearestaurant.com](http://camearestaurant.com).*

**Culinary Institute of America** Five student-staffed restaurants (the Ristorante Caterina de' Medici, American Bounty,

Escoffier, St. Andrew's Café and the Apple Pie Bakery Café) turn out satisfying fare. Book far in advance, and save time for a tour of the school. *1946 Campus Dr., Hyde Park; 845-471-6608; [ciachef.edu](http://ciachef.edu).*

**Gigi Trattoria** The hottest, and arguably the best, restaurant in Rhinebeck, this breezy, stylish spot serves vibrant and authentic Mediterranean dishes, such as veal saltimbocca and sautéed broccoli rabe. *6422 Montgomery St., Rhinebeck; 845-876-1007; [gigitrattoria.com](http://gigitrattoria.com).*

**Red Dot Restaurant & Bar** Follow the locals to this former butcher shop for eclectic, well-executed bistro food. *321 Warren St., Hudson; 518-828-3657.*

**Stissing House** Sophisticated French-American cuisine, much of it inspired by Provence, is on the menu at this relatively new valley addition, which is housed in a 226-year-old building. *Rtes. 199 and 82, Pine Plains; 518-398-8800; [stissinghouse.com](http://stissinghouse.com).*

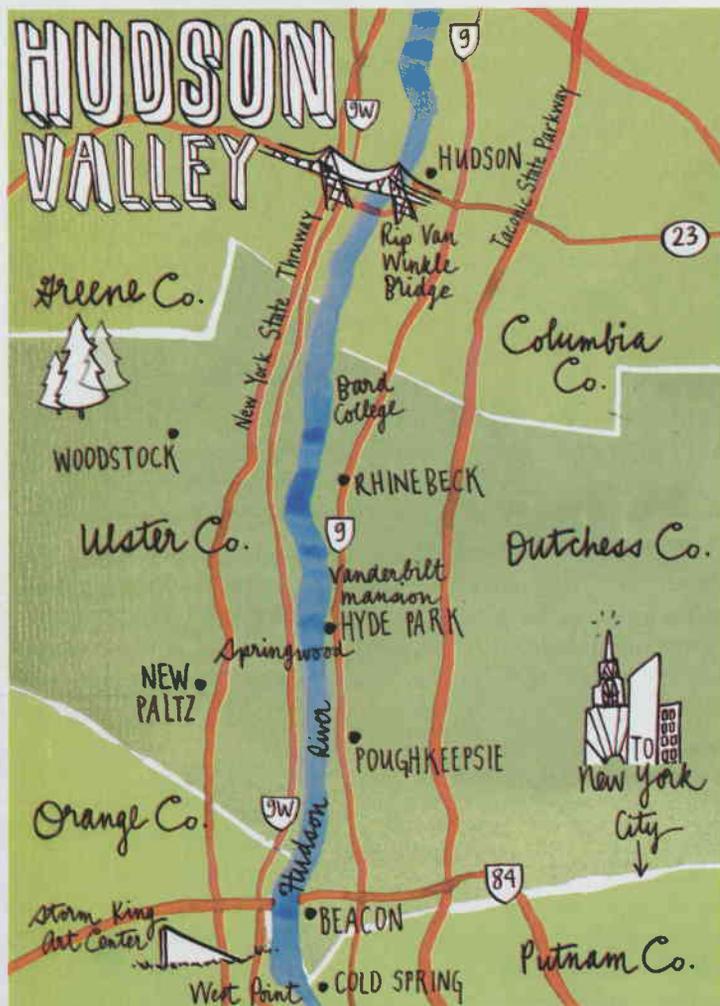
**Swoon Kitchenbar** One of Hudson's more refined restaurants, this modern, congenial brasserie, which has a sleek wooden bar, makes good use of area ingredients, such as smoked trout and organic shiitake mushrooms. Plus, it has a solid wine list. *340 Warren St., Hudson; 518-822-8938; [swoonkitchenbar.com](http://swoonkitchenbar.com).*

### WHAT TO DO

**Blue Sky Balloons** Reserve well in advance for fall trips. *\$195 a person for a one-hour flight. 99 Teller Ave., Beacon; 888-999-2461; [blueskyballoons.com](http://blueskyballoons.com).*

**Frances Lehman Loeb Art Center** Vassar College, 124 Raymond Ave., Poughkeepsie; *845-437-5632; [fllac.vassar.edu](http://fllac.vassar.edu).*

**Montgomery Place** The twenty-three-room Federal-



MAP BY COURTNEY WOTHERSPOON



twenty-minute drive to this award-winning vineyard, known for its Seyval Blanc, cassis and *méthode Champenoise* sparkling wines. 450 Schultztville Rd., Clinton Corners; 845-266-5372; [clintonvineyards.com](http://clintonvineyards.com).

#### **Millbrook Vineyards & Winery**

Considered the finest and most ambitious winery in the valley, it produces superior Pinot Noir, Cabernet Franc and Chardonnay. 26 Wing Rd., Millbrook; 800-662-9463; [millbrookwine.com](http://millbrookwine.com).

## **The West Side**

### **WHERE TO DRIVE**

From Kingston, travel south on Route 9W, past vegetable stands, vineyards and funky little towns. At West Park you can stop at Slabsides, the cabin where the naturalist John Burroughs retreated to write. Follow Route 299 west through New Paltz and Route 32 north back to Kingston.

### **WHERE TO STAY**

**Buttermilk Falls Inn & Spa** Just seventy-five miles from New

York City (and ten minutes north of Newburgh), the seventy-acre inn and spa is a good place for a two-day decompression stopover. Bunk down in a comfortable two-story house or a cottage overlooking the river, or stay in one of the inn's spacious rooms, some of which have balconies and fireplaces. The new spa uses geothermal and solar technologies. *Double rooms from \$220, suites from \$325, cottages from \$550.* 220 North Rd., Milton; 877-746-6772; [buttermilkfallsinn.com](http://buttermilkfallsinn.com).

#### **Inn at Canal House A**

hidden gem across the canal from the DePuy Canal House, it comprises five sunny guest rooms and suites, including those in the Locktender Cottage. *Double rooms from \$125, suites from \$155.* 1513 Main St., High Falls; 845-687-7700; [depuycanalhouse.net](http://depuycanalhouse.net).

#### **Mohonk Mountain House**

*Double rooms from \$480, suites from \$1,500.* 1000 Mountain Rest Rd., New Paltz; 800-772-6646; [mohonk.com](http://mohonk.com).

**FROM LEFT: Pork chop with sage, quince and pomegranate sauce at the Stissing House; Rhinebeck's shopping strip, East Market Street.**

### **WHERE TO EAT**

**Bear Café** This regional favorite, which serves pan-roasted chicken and other New American dishes, has maintained its energy for more than twenty years. 295 Tinker St., Woodstock; 845-679-5555; [bearcafe.com](http://bearcafe.com).

**DePuy Canal House** 1513 Main St., High Falls; 845-687-7700; [depuycanalhouse.net](http://depuycanalhouse.net).

### **WHAT TO DO**

**Storm King Art Center** Old Pleasant Hill Rd., Mountainville; 845-534-3115; [stormking.org](http://stormking.org).

### **WINERIES**

**Brotherhood** The gleaming visitors' center at the country's oldest winery is a popular stop on tasting tours. Also be sure to explore the museum. 100 Brotherhood Plaza Dr., Washingtonville; 845-496-3661; [brotherhoodwinery.net](http://brotherhoodwinery.net). -B.M.