



# EXPLORE

## 200+

Last year's inaugural Country Living Fair to Rhinebeck attracted crowds numbering in the tens of thousands. The list of vendors has expanded this year to include more than 200 farms, markets, designers, dealers, studios and boutiques.

## Home is where the décor is

**COUNTRY LIVING FAIR IN RHINEBECK THIS WEEKEND SPOTLIGHTS CUSTOM-BUILT HOUSE OF THE YEAR**

**T**HE COUNTRY LIVING Fair returns to the sprawling Dutchess County Fairgrounds in Rhinebeck on Friday, Saturday and Sunday, June 6 through 8 from 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. each day, rain or shine. Organized by *Country Living* magazine, the fair is a three-day extravaganza of charming down-home décor and up-cycled antiques and collectibles displayed in barn after barn on the Fairgrounds, along with plenty of food vendors available and live music to accompany it all.

The intention behind the Country Living Fair, say its organizers, is to bring the pages of the magazine to life for its readers, introducing the fairgoer to the same kind of do-it-yourself crafting, recipes, decorating and lifestyle advice that the publication offers within its pages. The Country Living Fairs have been hugely popular since their inception in 2006, when the first event was held in Ohio, followed by subsequent events in Georgia and Texas. Last year brought the inaugural Northeastern Country Living Fair to Rhinebeck, and if its enthusiastic reception from crowds numbering in the tens of thousands over the three days is indicative of what to expect this year, fans of upscale rustic will want to grab a few extra tote bags and fasten their seatbelts. The list of vendors selling food, antiques,



The 2014 Country Living House of the Year was built in Rhinebeck by Charles Petersheim (above) of Catskill Farms. Each year, the magazine has collaborated with a builder and designers to create a striking home showcasing the latest design trends. The Rhinebeck house will be available to tour by Country Living Fair ticketholders who travel the short distance to it by shuttle buses organized at the Fairgrounds.

collectibles and home décor has expanded this year to include more than 200 farms, markets, designers, dealers, studios and boutiques. But what elevates the Country Living Fair above mere flea market status are its design and lifestyle experts, of local and national reputation, who conduct demonstrations and give presentations in hourly programs on cooking, crafting and decorating the *Country Living* way. The publication's regular columnist Helaine Fendelman, who appraises antiques for readers by analyzing photographs that they send in to the magazine, will be present on Saturday and Sunday to offer antique appraisals in person in a showlike atmosphere where the audience gets in on

the vicarious fun of watching someone else find out how much his or her item is worth.

Other guests of national celebrity include Cari Cucksey, star of HGTV's *Cash & Cari*, in which she conducts estate sales and refurbishes old things into new treasures; she'll be in her booth, an outpost of her Michigan-based shop RePurpose, all weekend long. Kelsey Nixon of the Cooking Channel's *Kelsey's Essentials* will make an appearance, as will entertaining and design expert Michael Devine and Joanne Palmisano, DIY Network project designer and author of two salvage design books.

Familiar faces from our region giving presentations will include chef and restaurant proprietor Agnes Devereaux of the Village TeaRoom Restaurant & Bake Shop in New Paltz; Hammertown Barn's Joan Osofsky; Kristina Petersen Migoya, baking expert and lecturing instructor at the Culinary Institute of America in Hyde Park; and Greg Draiss, who runs the garden center at the Wappingers Falls Adams Fairacre Farm. Local purveyors will include Accord's Hudson Valley Seed Library and Tuthilltown Spirits of Gardiner, along with Heidi Haddard, who

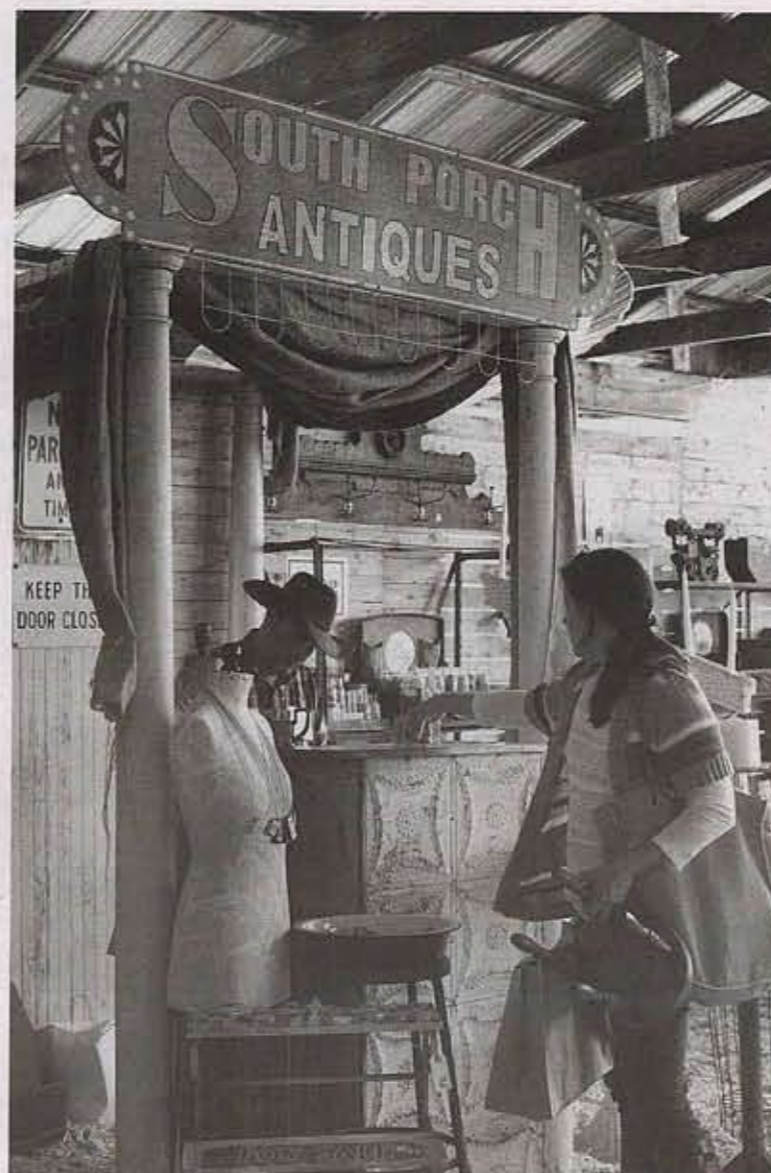
closed her home décor shop in Gardiner a few months ago but carries on the Hi-Ho concept through events like this.

Something new to the fair this year is the opportunity to check out Country Living's 2014 House of the Year. Included in the cost of admission, the house will be available to tour by Country Living Fair ticketholders who travel the short distance to it by shuttle buses organized at the Fairgrounds.

Visitors to the charming 1,500-square-foot, three-bedroom, two-bathroom farmhouse will find it decked out to the nines in *Country Living* style.

Each year for the past 15 years, the publication has traveled the country to collaborate with a builder and designers to create a striking home showcasing the latest design trends, with the results featured in a lavish ten-page photo spread in the September issue of the magazine.

This year's House of the Year was built in Rhinebeck by Catskill Farms, headquartered in Eldred, which specializes in building second homes for metropolitan New York buyers. "There's not enough of the good houses with good bones and low maintenance and predictable costs out there," says the



A booth at last year's Country Living Fair in Rhinebeck

company's founder, Charles Petersheim, "so that's been our niche."

He says that the design for the *Country Living* house was inspired by a little house in Fremont Center in northern Sullivan County that he saw for the first time in 2002. "It was sitting on a vacant piece of land, just rotting away, but it had a feeling to it that caught my attention as I drove by," Petersheim says. "We reinvented it with higher ceilings and better insulation and a more workable floor plan, but it was always the classic, quintessentially American farmhouse: the perfect house that inspired the whole business and became the business model for all of the nearly 100 homes Catskill Farms has built in the Hudson Valley since."

When *Country Living* editors saw an advertisement for his firm in an issue of *New York Magazine* last fall, Petersheim says, they got in touch and asked him about collaborating with them on the House of the Year project in Rhinebeck in time to feature the home during the Country Living Fair. It was a tight timeframe, made even more so by the fact that Petersheim's previous builds were in Sullivan and Ulster Counties; having not yet built in Dutchess County, he therefore had to obtain all the necessary permits before proceeding, along with finding a suitable piece of land. But he saw it as a challenge, and within ten days had gotten the ball rolling.

The home's buyers had been looking to build a home with him four years earlier, but hadn't yet found the right property. When this opportunity arose in Rhinebeck, they signed on; so as the plans for the house proceeded, it had a team of six design editors from *Country*

*Living* magazine, two homeowners, their team of two New York City designers and Petersheim all working on the design.

When the fierce winter of 2013/14 kicked in, that added another layer of complications, as severely cold weather delayed the pouring of the foundation. Things started happening after that, Petersheim says, but it still involved his workers being there seven days a week for a while, working around snowstorms and getting a house built in just a few months that normally would require much longer.

The farmhouse nestles nicely into its site, with a generous front porch and an expansive deck for entertaining out back, overlooking a lushly wooded view. The house features an open floor plan with wide-plank floors of tongue-and-groove yellow pine. The color scheme of the interior was chosen by the magazine editors, Petersheim says, and it will be

up to the homeowners when they take possession of the house after the Country Living Fair closes as to whether they wish to change anything or not.

Currently the house has peach-toned pink ceilings downstairs, a vivid mocha-brown-and-white diagonal tile backsplash and wall in the kitchen and slate-blue stairs leading up to the second floor, where a dark raspberry-colored full bath is found. The bedrooms upstairs each have a distinctive color scheme: One features a chartreuse closet door and moldings, another has yellow-and-blue flocked wallpaper with a distinctively vintage flair and the third has been hand-stenciled with a floral design inspired by wallpaper.

As of presstime, the house had not yet been filled with furnishings and styled; but by the time Country Living Fair visitors come through, it will all be in place, as if stepping into the magazine's pages. The results will be seen in the September 2014 issue of the publication.

Petersheim now has four other homes planned for Dutchess County, he says, and is looking forward to expanding into the area. Because the price of land determines the cost of building (the House of the Year in Rhinebeck was sold for \$450,000, with most of Catskill Farms' houses costing between \$375,000 and \$600,000), the idea, says Petersheim, is to find that point "where design and cost meet perfectly on the matrix: spending enough to get the impact, but not enough to break the budget."

The process usually involves Catskill Farms buying the land, designing the

home, building it and selling it, with the buyers typically coming in pretty early in the process, he says. The collaborative aspects of building a home appeal to many buyers, Petersheim adds, because they can design the home to incorporate the historic details, but switch the floor plan around to suit modern living styles.

The builder says that he has not encountered any resistance from longtime residents of the Hudson Valley over building new-made-to-look-old houses for second-home buyers. "We build homes that are modest, restrained and super-tasteful," Petersheim says. "I think people get what we're doing, and we're a good company; that goes along with it. If we did something stupid, like clearing all the trees or building too close to other properties, we'd be bad neighbors, but we don't do that. We fit in with all the historical homes around us, and we typically enhance the neighborhood and raise property values."

For more information about Catskill Farms, call (845) 557-3600 or visit [www.catskillfarms.com](http://www.catskillfarms.com).

Tickets for the Country Living Fair are available at the gate for \$16 for a one-day pass or \$20 for a three-day weekend pass. —Sharyn Flanagan

*Country Living Fair, Friday-Sunday, June 6-8, 10 a.m.-5 p.m., \$16/\$20, Dutchess County Fairgrounds, 6550 Spring Brook Avenue (Route 9), Rhinebeck; (866) 500-FAIR, [www.stellashow.com](http://www.stellashow.com), [www.countryliving.com](http://www.countryliving.com).*

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