

Country Living's House of the Year highlights second annual Fair



Charles "Chuck" Petersheim of Catskill Farms talks about the Country Living House of the Year for 2014. The home is at 602 Ackert Hook Road in Rhinebeck. Tours are only available to Country Living Fair ticket holders via shuttle from the Dutchess County Fairgrounds this weekend.

-Photo by Curtis Schmidt

By Curtis Schmidt

An old American house has always symbolized a simple, traditional and romantic way of life. With that philosophy in mind, designer/builder Charles "Chuck" Petersheim has combined the "architecture of yesteryear" with some of

the latest trends to build Country Living Magazine's House of the Year for 2014 – and it's right here in Dutchess County.

Located at 602 Ackert Hook Road in the Town of Rhinebeck, the 1,500 square-foot, three-bedroom, two-bathroom house

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House of the Year

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will be showcased during the Country Living Fair set Friday, Saturday and Sunday at the Dutchess County Fairgrounds.

This is the second year of the Country Living Fair locally, which features hundreds of home-related vendors from all over the Northeast. Produced by Stella Show Management, this year's event will feature editors from Country Living magazine and the following special guests:

- Brent Ridge and Josh Kilmer-Purcell, "The Fabulous Beekman Boys";
- Cari Cucksey, star of HGTV's "Cash & Cari";
- Kelsey Nixon, star of Cooking Channel's "Kelsey's Essentials";
- Michael Devine, entertaining and design expert; and
- Designers Anne Maxwell Foster and Suysel dePedro Cunningham of Tilton Fenwick.

Country Living will provide continuous shuttle bus service to the nearby house for Fair ticket holders only from 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. daily during the fair. Upon arrival at the fairgrounds, check the Country Living Fair Map for the House of the Year shuttle bus pickup location.

The home, which has already been purchased, is a regionally inspired farmhouse with more than 1,000 square feet of porches and covered decks. The buyer intends to use the home as a weekend getaway.

Petersheim's company, Catskill Farms in Eldred, has built more than 100 homes in surrounding counties. With wide-plank floors, salvaged plank ceilings, open floor plans and security system with all the newest amenities, the house has an 'old-home feel' with modern luxuries and conveniences.

Petersheim said his firm's design philosophy "is pretty in-sync with Country Living on a number of different levels. The magazine's readership mirrors Catskill Farms' clients, meaning they appreciate subtlety, respect architecture of yesteryear, and strive for modesty in design in an era of overdone-ness and fancy." He added, "What Country Living liked about Catskill Farms is that we are inspired by the same things – good living,



One of the bedrooms in the Country Living House of the Year for 2014. The home is located in Rhinebeck.

-Photo by Curtis Schmidt

good-looking homes and functional, restrained architecture."

His goal was to build a house in Dutchess County, a new market place, and build a national awareness of his company by working with designers from Country Living Magazine.

Examples of attention to detail include old-fashioned radiators that Petersheim considers "a work of art that is built right into the home, in addition to performing their duty of heating the home."

The design also makes use of salvaged wood from local and regional barns and homes throughout the house as accents to define the home.

"The hand-crafted, strap-hinged closet doors are another great example, but mostly, it's our respect for restraint, materials and architecture that we're saluting," said Petersheim.

At the same time the home does incorporate a variety of modern conveniences.

"Our new homes are also souped-up under the hood, with the enhanced insulation, on-demand hot water heaters, low-flow water fixtures and high-efficiency boilers," said Petersheim. On the side of safety, the home features a security system, smoke alarms and low heat alarms.

An open floor plan encompasses the first floor of the home, allowing for the ease of traffic flow.

"We rethink walls to create an open flow, especially for smaller homes, which tend to seem 'boxy.' We began replicating old homes, but reinventing ceiling heights, window sizes and the openness of the floor plan," said Petersheim. "This house is a great example of how this technique really opens up the whole home; it's a relatively small trick, but it's unusual."

He describes the bedrooms upstairs as "adequate, but not oversized rooms with the master having a little extra elbow room."

Porches and decks surround the home and are actually an extension of the home.

"They enable a modest size home to feel and live much larger than its interior square footage. The decks and porches nearly double the available space for the homeowner," said Petersheim. "Fireplaces and rocking-chair porches are where most of where our clients' dreams start."

For more information on the fair or to buy advance tickets, visit www.stellashows.com/shows/countryliving-rhinebeck.