

52

REASONS TO LOVE WESTCHESTER

HOW DO WE LOVE THE COUNTY?
LET US COUNT THE WAYS.

BY MARISA LASCALA

With Juliana Brittis, Jonathan Quartuccio, Robert Schork, and Julia Sexton

Westchester residents are a diverse bunch, but put us all in a room together and you're likely to find one commonality: we all love Westchester. Sure, we may kvetch about the high taxes and complain about keeping up with our neighbors, but we only gripe because we care. And, really, what's not to love? From our gorgeous greenery to our creative cuisine to—most important—our passionate people, the reasons to fall in love with the county are endless. Here are just 52 of our favorites.

[52 REASONS TO LOVE WESTCHESTER]

1: Because We're Not New York City

MOST PEOPLE ASSUME THAT PEOPLE who live in Westchester are going for a New York City Lite experience. It's an easy mistake to make, since we eat BLT steaks, get our hair cut at Devachan Salon, shop for new wardrobes at Rothman's, and commute down south for a job, a night out, or a Broadway show. The truth is, while we may spend a lot of time in the City and patronize City-based businesses, we choose to live here precisely because Westchester is *not* New York City. We want to give up the steel and concrete for a little bit of greenery and some breathing room.

We can see fall foliage without taking a day off from work and going on a three-hour road trip. We like having front lawns and backyards, so our kids can play on the grass without taking a subway ride first. When it's time for them to start school, we're happy that deciding between our public and private schools is choosing between the best of two already-great options. We love raising our kids together—and absent of any stroller-parents-vs.-childless-hipster tensions. We enjoy driving ourselves around—and secretly resent having to pay someone else to do it for us—and knowing that there's a (non-parallel) parking spot waiting just for us when we get back. When we're commuting, we can do so civilly, without rubbing up against each other on a crowded, sweaty subway.

We spread out. We love having closets, attics, basements, porches, mud rooms, and storage spaces—places to put the items we buy in bulk without having to carry them in our arms for 15 blocks and up four flights of stairs. We're glad to give up our one-out-of-millions anonymity and get to know our neighbors—and know them through our own conversations, not from what we can overhear through wafer-thin walls (and pretend to have ignored the next day).

We like knowing that while our neighbors might be world-beaters and Masters of the Universe by day, they're soccer coaches, scout-troop leaders, and get-your-hands-dirty playdate organizers on weekends. We like that while there are celebrities and notable residents in the county, there are no paparazzi and no snooty, velvet-robe VIP clubs.

And we love that there are absolutely, positively no *Real Housewives* franchises based here.



What traffic looked like on the Bronx River Parkway in the 1920s

2: Because We're First

WE LIKE TO BE INNOVATORS, NOT FOLLOWERS. NOTHING IRKS US MORE than falling behind on the national conversation. As a tribute to our good old Yankee ingenuity, we present some famous firsts as evidence that Westchester rides ahead of the curve.

- **First Reading of the Declaration of Independence in New York State:** Westchester County Courthouse, White Plains, 1776
- **First Internationally Famous Author from America:** Washington Irving, Tarrytown, 1783-1859
- **First Chief Justice of the United States:** John Jay, Katonah, 1789
- **First Commercial Winery:** John Underhill's home, Croton-on-Hudson, 1827
- **First Elevator Company:** Otis, Yonkers, 1853
- **First Female Self-Made Millionaire:** Madame C.J. Walker, Irvington, 1867-1919
- **First Theme Park:** Glen Island, New Rochelle, 1881
- **First Golf Club in the United States** (that's still in operation): St. Andrew's Golf Club, Yonkers, 1888
- **First Pet Cemetery:** Hartsdale Pet Cemetery and Crematory, Hartsdale, 1896
- **First Synthetic Plastic Invented:** Bakelite, Yonkers, 1906
- **First Meeting of the Professional Golfers' Association:** Wykagyl Country Club, New Rochelle, 1916
- **First Multi-Lane, Limited-Access Parkway in North America:** Bronx River Parkway, Bronxville to Valhalla, 1925
- **First FM Broadcast:** By Yonkers resident Edward H. Armstrong, 544 N Broadway, Yonkers, 1934
- **First Non-Sectarian Holistic Learning Center:** Wainwright House, Rye, 1951
- **First County in New York to Recognize Same-Sex Unions:** Westchester County, 2006
- **First Hydrogen Filling Station in the Tri-State Area:** Shell, White Plains, 2007
- **First Public School System to Eliminate AP Courses:** Scarsdale High School, Scarsdale, 2007-2008
- **First Animal Hospital with CyberKnife Radiosurgery System:** Animal Specialty Center, Yonkers, 2008

BRONX RIVER PARKWAY IMAGE COURTESY OF WESTCHESTER COUNTY ARCHIVES PHOTO COLLECTION



3: Because Frank Lloyd Wright Thought This Was a Nice Place to Live

THE NEIGHBORHOOD THAT WRIGHT HELPED BUILD EVEN HAS an idyllic-sounding name: Usonia. In the 1940s, an engineer named David Henken petitioned Wright to build a community out in the woods. Though Wright didn't design each individual house (only a couple of the houses are his, including the famed "Sol Friedman House" and "Roland Reisley House"), he did put a plan in place for a 47-home development using his signature modern style. The original inhabitants formed a cooperative, rolled up their sleeves, and banded together to build each other's homes. (Can you imagine that happening today?)

And, really, what better place for Wright to plan a neighborhood? His houses are designed to connect with nature—and no one has better nature going on than we do. Indeed, Usonia and its little patch of Pleasantville are inextricably linked. "Wright wanted the houses to grow like trees out of the land," says Gordon Kahn, an architect with

the Manhattan-based Gordon Kahn and Associates, who grew up in Usonia. "The stone that was used in the houses were stones that were found at the site. The woods were all natural in tone, and the houses wrapped themselves around hills. There's a lot of great indoor/outdoor ambiguity, but the low overhangs give a sense of shelter."

Since the land and houses originally were owned by the cooperative instead of the individuals, Usonia grew into a tight-knit community. "People moving up from the City and experiencing the struggles of trying to realize Wright's vision for a utopia in the United States, and the joy of its completion, brought everyone really close together," Kahn says. "We were all in and out of each other's refrigerators. I still have close friends that I know from growing up with them in Usonia."

Today, Usonia is still the enclave of modest homes that Wright envisioned. You can take a scenic drive and try to glimpse some of these modernist structures by heading up Bear Ridge Road in Pleasantville.

4: Because We're Not New Jersey or Long Island

PHOTO COURTESY OF ROLAND REISLEY AND USONIA, NEW YORK: BUILDING A COMMUNITY WITH FRANK LLOYD WRIGHT, BY ROLAND REISLEY & JOHN TIMPANE - PRINCETON ARCHITECTURAL PRESS, 2001

5: Because You Can Take a Boat To Work

THE FERRY SYSTEM HELPED MAKE NEW YORK GREAT. MORE than 100 ferry routes have crisscrossed the Hudson in the past three centuries. According to Hudsonriver.com, at its peak popularity in 1927, more than 27 million passengers took the ride from New Jersey to Manhattan (until the Holland Tunnel killed all the fun). Today, you can cruise to work in Roaring '20s style by taking the New York Water Taxi. Board the ferry in Yonkers and sail on down to Manhattan, stopping at West 39th Street (with free shuttle buses that bring you into the heart of the City), the World Financial Center (Battery Park City), and Wall Street (Pier 11). The cost is a '20s-feeling 10 bucks, and it'll get you there in roughly half an hour. Plus, the scenery you get is way better than the bumpers you'd be staring at if you drove down the West Side Highway. For commuting information, visit nywatertaxi.com.



6: Because You Can Order a Book in Somers and Pick It Up In Yonkers

IT'S A SHAME THAT IT TOOK A RECESSION FOR SOME people to recognize just how awesome the Westchester Library System is. Gone are the stuffy, musty institutions in which old ladies went from table to table admonishing patrons to "shh!" Our local libraries function more like hip bookstores—only you don't have to pay for what you take out. Don't go to Barnes & Noble to talk books over coffee and baked goods—just head to the Ossining Public Library's Footnote Café, where the same folks behind the Wobble Café dish up snacks and sandwiches. Think libraries are full of stuffed shirts? The Warner Library in Tarrytown recently hosted a fundraiser themed "Harley Night," with Harley-Davidson bikes, roadside food, a temporary tattoo station, and a screening of *The Wild One*. If you're not just looking to hang out, you also can use the library to borrow CDs and DVDs (no more Netflix), prep for tests (no more expensive SAT tutors), look for jobs (and have someone check over your resumé), and borrow books from any of the 38 member libraries, delivered to your local branch. Just try not to shout with excitement—there are still people trying to read in there.



The first Carvel Ice Cream Shop at its opening in 1934

7: Because Carvel Started Here

There, right on Hartsdale's Central Avenue, looking like an old set from *American Graffiti*, stood—until very recently—a perfect remnant of the American Cone Age. That's right, the original, 1930s-era Carvel Ice Cream shop, where gravel-voiced Tom Carvel first sold his ice cream in 1934, stood here for decades, its Atomic-Age glass frontage designed to light up like a beacon across Central Avenue. From inside the store, you could look at its enveloping circle of blacktop (so you could aim your Edsel's hood at the counter, wherever you parked). This was the hallowed site that spawned "Cookie Puss" (the frozen dessert made even more iconic by the Beastie Boys) and the unforgettable "Fudgie the Whale." How can that *not* make you proud to be from Westchester?

PHOTOS THIS PAGE COURTESY OF THE NEW YORK WATER TAXI AND CARVEL

8: Because Hollywood Comes to Us

LOS ANGELES MAY BE THE CENTER OF the film industry, but it's not known for its authenticity. When directors get sick of all the phoniness, they move their productions here—and the local movie business is booming. Just read this list of some of the films that were shot either partially or entirely in Westchester in the past few years, and check out the caliber of filmmakers giving the county its close-up:

■ **It's Complicated** (2009) Directed by Nancy Meyers with Alec Baldwin, Steve Martin, and Meryl Streep (1)

■ **Baby Mama** (2008): Directed by Michael McCullers with Tina Fey and Amy Poehler (2)

■ **American Gangster** (2007) Directed by Ridley Scott with Russell Crowe and Denzel Washington (3)

■ **Before the Devil Knows You're Dead** (2007) Directed by Sidney Lumet with Philip Seymour Hoffman and Marisa Tomei

■ **I Am Legend** (2007) Directed by Francis Lawrence with Will Smith (4)

■ **Michael Clayton** (2007) Directed by Tony Gilroy with George Clooney

■ **The Departed** (2006) Directed by Martin Scorsese with Leonardo DiCaprio and Matt Damon

■ **The Good Shepherd** (2006) Directed by Robert DeNiro with Matt Damon and Angelina Jolie (5)

■ **Little Children** (2006) Directed by Todd Field with Kate Winslet and Patrick Wilson (6)

Also keep your eyes peeled for local landmarks when these future movies hit theaters:

■ **Sex and the City 2** Directed by Michael Patrick King with Sarah Jessica Parker

■ **The Beaver** Directed by Jodie Foster with Mel Gibson

■ **Salt** Directed by Phillip Noyce with Angelina Jolie

■ **The Other Guys** Directed by Adam McKay with Will Ferrell and Mark Wahlberg

■ **Rabbit Hole** Directed by John Cameron Mitchell with Aaron Eckhart and Nicole Kidman

■ **The Bounty** Directed by Andy Tennant with Jennifer Aniston and Gerard Butler

■ **Going the Distance** Directed by Nanette Burstein with Drew Barrymore and Justin Long



9: Because We Still Have Dirt Roads, Pop Shops, And Dinner Theater

YES, NEWER IS BETTER—EXCEPT WHEN IT'S not. What can be dismissed out-of-hand as fusty and old-fashioned one day can provoke nostalgic feelings of longing the next. (Oh, what we wouldn't give for a drive-in movie theater!) Luckily, Westchester understands the importance of history and isn't likely to tear something down the minute it becomes outdated. We want streets that we can ride down on our horses. We want our malteds. We want to see our theater live and not on a flat-screen. If retro is cool, in that hip-to-be-square kind of way, then Westchester is the swellest, swingiest county around. If you're looking for some of these old-timey pleasures, you can find them here—while they last.

■ **Baxter Road**, North Salem

As you pass the horses, barns, and farmhouses, you can pretend this section of the county is the same as it was a century ago.

■ **Lollipop the Candy Shop**, 53 Main St, Tarrytown (914) 332-0780

This is an old-fashioned-style candy store, where you browse aisles and aisles of colorful goodies like chocolate-covered gummy bears, jawbreakers, malt balls, and other nostalgic sweets. Try not to fill your bag to the brim.

■ **Rocnroe's Pop Shop**

11 Wheeler Ave, Pleasantville (914) 747-9797; rocnorespops.com

Stop in for a shake made with Longford's silky ice cream, then buy a few Bazooka Joes for the road.

■ **Solano's Lincoln Lounge**, 209 Stevens Ave, Mount Vernon (914) 664-9747

If you're in the mood for some homey, red-sauce Italian food served on retro plastic tablecloths, the Lincoln Lounge has been perfecting the vibe since 1950.

■ **Star Diner**, 66 ½ E Post Rd, White Plains (914) 684-8702

Grab your fountain sodas and cheeseburgers at this teeny lunch counter. The chrome structure dates back to the 1930s, and the prices harken back to that time, too.

■ **Westchester Broadway Theatre**, 1 Broadway Plz, Elmsford (914) 592-2222; broadwaytheatre.com
42nd Street, which will play here from December 30 to February 6, 2010, satisfies the longing for classic musical numbers with big ensembles, sparkly costumes, and flashy tap dancing.



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10: Because There's Art Everywhere You Look

OUR COUNTY MUSEUMS ARE FANTASTIC—you know, when we actually have the time to go out and visit them. Lucky for us, though, Westchester doesn't keep all its art locked indoors. Public art is everywhere, and you can soak in a mini-Met experience without any "suggested" donation. Besides, outdoor art sometimes puts finished pieces closer to their inspirations. "All my work finds its source in images drawn from nature—forms that I see in all kinds of settings," says sculptor David Hayes, who had more than 60 of his pieces displayed around White Plains this year. Here, some of our favorite works of public art:

Title: *The Rising* (1)

Artist: Frederic Schwartz

Location: Kensico Dam Plaza, Bronx River Parkway, Valhalla

The County's September 11th memorial, designed by Manhattan architect Frederic Schwartz, inspires as its 109 steel rods—one for every Westchester resident lost on 9/11—intertwine as they reach 80 feet into the air.

Title: *Untitled*

Artist: Mary Ann Lomonaco

Location: Westchester County Airport, 240 Airport Rd, White Plains

What does it say about a county when it makes an effort to dress up even its local airport with public art? Mary Ann Lomonaco's work encourages visions of easy, no-hassle flights through 45 colorful sculptures that look like an abstract flock of birds.

Title: *The Great Hunger Memorial*

Artist: Eamonn O'Doherty

Location: V.E. Macy Park, Saw Mill River Rd, Ardsley

Hidden down a path in a park that's rather remote to begin with—the only entrance is on the northbound side of the Saw Mill River Parkway—this memorial to the Irish potato famine feels mystical in its secrecy.

Title: *Gateway to the Waterfront*

Artist: Richard Haas

Location: Warburton Ave and Main St, Yonkers

Indicative of the rebirth of downtown Yonkers, Haas took a blah, blank wall and infused it with the life of the city through a trompe l'oeil mural of classic-looking buildings and street life (dogs, trolleys, etc.). If you keep your eyes peeled, you can see a few other Haas murals in downtown Yonkers.

Title: *David Hayes Retrospective* (2)

Artist: David Hayes

Location: Throughout White Plains

Notice any painted-steel structures in White Plains? All year, the city has played host to a 62-piece retrospective of the artist's sculptures, and instead of shutting them away indoors, they've been in public places like Tibbetts Brook Park.

Title: *The First Lady of Jazz* (3)

Artist: Vinnie Bagwell

Location: Yonkers Metro-North Railroad Station, 5 Buena Vista Ave, Yonkers

Legendary jazz singer Ella Fitzgerald grew up in Yonkers, and now she serenades

commuters via a life-size bronze statue, hand outstretched in song.

Title: *Rip Van Winkle* (4)

Artist: Richard Maslowski

Location: Main St (between the Village Hall and Irvington Middle School), Irvington

Maslowski celebrates our literary heritage with a bronze sculpture of Rip Van Winkle, bleary-eyed and bearded like he just woke up from his 20-year nap. Maslowski is no stranger to public art in Westchester, having also created a bronze statue of Abraham Lincoln to commemorate his visit to Peekskill.

Title: *Peekskill Public Tile Project*

Artist: Various

Location: Between the Peekskill Metro-North station (300 Railroad Ave) and the Hudson Valley Center for Contemporary Art (1701 Main St), Peekskill

This project isn't just *for* the public—it's made *by* the public. More than 2,000 local students designed tiles to mark a path from the Metro-North station to the museum.

Title: *Donald M. Kendall Sculpture Gardens*

Artist: Various

Location: PepsiCo Headquarters, 700 Anderson Hill Rd, Purchase

The Granddaddy of public art in Westchester, PepsiCo's sculpture trail features works from masters including Alexander Calder, Auguste Rodin, Claes Oldenburg, and other big-name artists—and, for some silly reason, they won't charge you a dime to go walk around and look at them all.

THE RISING PHOTO BY JESSICA JAMROZ, FREDERIC SCHWARTZ ARCHITECTS; THE FIRST LADY OF JAZZ PHOTO BY JONATHAN LEWIS



11: Because You Can Live Like One of New York's Oldest Families for Just \$13 Million

FORGET PHILANTHROPIST BROOKE ASTOR'S PARK AVENUE DUPLEX.

For its hefty price tag—\$25 million—all you get is 14 city-sized rooms and a nice view of Central Park. If you want to buy your way into high society through jaw-dropping real estate, Astor's sprawling, 65-acre Holly Hill compound in Briarcliff Manor is a relative steal at just \$12.9 million. (That is, if you can come up with the \$199,000 in yearly taxes.) For your millions, forget looking at Central Park—here, you'd be practically living on it. The grounds feature gardens of all types, a greenhouse, a barn, a meadow, and even an apple orchard. That's in addition to the four-bedroom gardener's cottage, the chauffeur's apartment, the pump house, the barn, and all the other outbuildings on the property. Let's not forget the grand manse itself: unlike the two-floor duplex, Holly Hill boasts 10,000 square feet of interior space, carved up into 24 rooms, 13 bedrooms, 11 bathrooms, and various spaces for entertaining. (Sun porch? Philosopher's Room?) Be warned: living like an Astor comes with a price other than the small fortune it'll take to buy the property. You'll also need a strong stomach to sift through all of the acrimonious legal wrangling involved in the Astor estate. In October, Astor's son, Anthony Marshall, was convicted of stealing from his Alzheimer's-ridden mother—just hope he didn't leave any bad karma behind on the property.



12: BECAUSE SOMEDAY, I-287 WILL BE COMPLETED

BROOKE ASTOR PHOTO BY RON GALELLA/WIREIMAGE

13: BECAUSE OUR KIDS KNOW HOW TO HAVE FUN



PHOTOS SUBMITTED BY OUR READERS (THIS PAGE, CLOCKWISE FROM TOP): LAURA HIBBLER; OAK ATKINSON; CHARLES CLAY

[52 REASONS TO LOVE WESTCHESTER]



PHOTOS SUBMITTED BY OUR READERS (THIS PAGE, CLOCKWISE FROM TOP LEFT): KATHERINE CURRY; DEBORAH J KARSON; ANTHONY PELLEGRINO; JAMES WURSTER



14: BECAUSE OF OUR UNCHARTED ISLANDS

Pop quiz: where can you find Huckleberry Island, Echo Island, and Pea Island? Though they may sound like part of some darling archipelago somewhere near Martha's Vineyard, all of these islands—and many others—are off the coast of New Rochelle. Some, you may have heard of, such as Glen Island (where the Glen Island Harbour Club plays host to many weddings) or David's Island (which has a rich military history). Others, however, keep a much lower profile. Huckleberry Island is more popular with birds than it is with people. Columbia Island's most famous resident was a CBS radio transmitter. Echo Island is home to little else besides the low-key Echo Bay Yacht Club. Others—Pine Island, Pea Island, and Hen Island—are either undeveloped or are private residences. It just goes to show that, even if you think you know everything about the county, there are still places to discover and secrets to uncover.

David's Island keeps watch over New Rochelle.

15: Because We Still Have That Revolutionary Spirit

MANY RESIDENTS OF OUR COUNTY—including some elected local officials—have been toying with a really rad idea: let's dump county government! While we haven't turned the Hudson or Sound dark with any tea parties (yet), the hot-button issue has stirred up a tempest or two in a teapot—namely one belonging to the Spano family. The wayward son of County Executive Andy Spano has been actively campaigning to put his papa outta work by abolishing his job (and even, at one point, by trying to run against him). Pitting fathers against sons, dividing households—it doesn't get more revolutionary than that!



16: Because, on Almost Any Night, You Can Dine with Richard Gere

While that silver-haired (and very fit) fox is already married, that doesn't mean you can't gaze into his eyes every night. Just head down to cozy Bedford Post, where co-owner Richard Gere is a fixture, looking casual, dashing, and fairly approachable as he tucks into his nightly dinner. Sadly, his wife—Bedford Post's co-owner and designer Carey Lowell—might get in the way of your love connection, but then you must realize that nothing worthwhile is ever easy.

17: Because Our Hot Dogs Kick Burger Butt

YOU'VE BEEN HEARING A LOT LATELY ABOUT NEW YORK CITY CULT burgers—you know, how this trendy pattie fuses sirloin and short ribs, while that pattie uses a secret blend of chuck and buffalo. Whatever. Look, Westchester has been onto this secret-blend-of-meats thing for decades; it's called Walter's Hot Dogs.

Since its inception in the '20s—and probably as a reaction to Upton Sinclair's muck-raking exposé of the meatpacking industry, *The Jungle*—Walter's Hot Dogs has been using its own specially manufactured sausages. What's in those unique, pale pink links? The precise recipe may be a secret, but the basics are pork, beef, and veal, split and caramelized to perfection on a griddle in a lavish, hotly debated fatty sauce. Is it bacon grease? Butter? A bit of both? Who knows? All we know is that it's divine—and ahead of the pack by about eight decades.

RICHARD GERE © WARNER BROS. PICTURES

18: BECAUSE WE WERE BIKING BEFORE IT WAS COOL

SOME MUNICIPALITIES ARE HAPPY TO slap a little icon of a biker on their streets and smugly call it a bike-friendly city. (And good luck navigating all that traffic, city bikers—watch out for parked cars opening their street-side doors.) While these so-called bike lanes may satisfy some commuters, the real bikers head to the trails of Westchester.

Entire families here strap on their helmets and hit the North County Trailway, a 22-mile paved bike-and-pedestrian path that wends its way from the Putnam border all the way down to the Bronx. Following the Putnam Division of the New York Central Railroad, you can bet you'll see great scenery on the trail—and more than just tailpipes and taxicabs.

For more of a challenge, serious cyclists head to the Graham Hills Trailway. Though the trail here is only five miles, it's vigorous—even experienced mountain bikers come out huffing and puffing in the end. (Good thing Stone Barns is close to the trail for some refreshments.)

If you have to feel the thrill of riding on a thoroughfare that's also used by automobiles, you can still avoid those death-defying brushes with cars by heading to Bicycle Sundays on the Bronx River Parkway in the months of May, June, and September. The county sections off a slice of the highway, from the County Center in White Plains to Scarsdale Road in Yonkers, for pedal-powered vehicles—and it has been doing so since 1974, way before fixed-gear bikes became the newest trendy accessory.



19: BECAUSE WE FINALLY CAUGHT UP WITH THE TIMES WITH OUR FIRST GAY PRIDE EVENT

Let's face it: for being New York City's preeminent bedroom community, remarkably, Westchester has kept to the, ahem, straight and narrow. That is until this year, when the county sponsored its first-ever gay pride event. Taking a page from the "gay days" held at Disney World, Westchester held one of its own at Rye Playland in September. Let's hope this is the start of a new county tradition—and maybe by next year's event, Westchester will have its own gay bar or club to be proud of, too.

20: Because We Put the Local Back in Locavorian Eating



THAT'S RIGHT, TRENDY BROOKLYN AND MANHATTAN, with all your hipster-packed, locavorian, "haute-barnyard" restaurants—can you actually pretend that you raise your food where you eat it? We didn't think so. But here in the 'burbs, we can do just that—and even raise our own chickens and goats at home, too. That means that while we can aim for single-digit food miles with Westchester-raised eats from Rainbeau Ridge, Stone Barns Center, or Cabbage Hill Farm, we also can eliminate food miles altogether by plowing up our lawns and putting in chicken coops and vegetable beds. Take that, Boerum Hill, with your pathetic little window boxes.



The Paramount Center for the Arts is nearing its eighth decade.

21: Because Our Theaters Are Old, But the Acts That Play Them Are New

THE YEAR THE TARRYTOWN MUSIC HALL OPENED—WAY BACK IN 1885—was the year President Chester A. Arthur dedicated the Washington Monument, the Statue of Liberty landed in the New York Harbor, the first-ever issue of *Good Housekeeping* hit the newsstands, and the country's first skyscraper (10 whole floors!) went up in Chicago. Yeah, that was a long time ago. But even though the Music Hall is closing in on its 125th anniversary—boasting the same Queen Anne-style brickwork and art deco marquee it sported in the earliest years—what goes on inside is refreshingly new. Concerts there feature cutting-edge and indie artists, including Andrew Bird, David Byrne, Neko Case, Rufus Wainwright, and Sharon Jones & The Dap-Kings (appearing this month on December 3).

Further north, the Paramount Center for the Arts came onto the scene a few decades after the Tarrytown Music Hall, in 1930. And by "Paramount," yes, we mean *that* Paramount—the theater was built as a 1,500-seat movie palace by a subsidiary of Paramount Pictures. But you're not getting any Depression-era entertainment here. Gone are the "all-talking" 1930s pictures, and taking their place are events like the county's first hip-hop symposium, concerts with banjo visionary Béla Fleck, readings with satirist David Sedaris, and performances from violin heartthrob Joshua Bell (coming up this March).

Brand-new, cookie-cutter performing arts venues may have state-of-the-art sound systems, truffle popcorn on sale in the lobby, and WiFi so you can Twitter during shows, but nothing beats seeing your favorite artist in a nationally registered, acoustically pristine, historic venue, belting it out from a stage that you know performers have been standing on for decades, even centuries.

■ Tarrytown Music Hall
13 Main St, Tarrytown (914) 631-3390; tarrytownmusichall.org

■ Paramount Center for the Arts
1008 Brown St, Peekskill (914) 739-2333; paramountcenter.org

PARAMOUNT CENTER PHOTO BY GEORGE THOMPSON

22: Because We Can Dine On the River (and Not Need to Side-Step Rats)

RINGED BY ROADS AND WALLED OFF BY DEFUNCT industry, the Hudson River in Manhattan feels like a bit of an afterthought, visible only from a distance from the highest of residential towers, or by purpose-filled pedestrians, hiking a long, skinny trail. Yet, when Westchester's industry left, it opened up wide riverfront properties, from which you can gaze—depending where you stand—on the Tappan Zee and George Washington Bridges, the twinkling lights of Manhattan, or on the majestic Palisades. Restaurants like Harvest-on-Hudson, X2O, Half Moon, and Red Hat on the River have all transformed former industrial sites into celebrations of Westchester's most spectacular amenity. Only in Westchester can you dine next to the water, cooled by Hudson breezes as you listen to the gentle lap of the waves.



23: Because It's Not Easy Being Green—But We Are Anyway

WE LIKE OUR GREEN SPACES, AND WESTCHESTER residents work hard to keep them that way. We've got 18,000 acres of parkland, a number that's growing and improving, mostly along our reawakening river (just take a look at the new section of RiverWalk located at Croton Landing Park). Suburban farmers have benefited from New York State tax advantages and protections, and we now have 17,800 acres of farmland to call our own. Organizations like Riverkeeper, the Federated Conservationists of Westchester, and the Hudson River Audubon Society work to correct past abuses on our environment and keep our land, water, and skies clean. All over, green construction ensures that new buildings have the smallest carbon footprint possible. Need proof? Just look at the Jacob Burns Film Center's new Media Arts Lab in Pleasantville, which is built from recycled building material and uses natural light, solar panels, and geothermal heating and cooling to keep the whole thing running. Our municipalities even use hybrid cars. With all this effort going on to keep the county eco-friendly and ecological, no one can say we're not doing our part in the green movement.

24 to 34: Because Our College Students Love It Here

WITH THE TURN OF A TASSLE AND THE TOSS OF A CAP, Westchester's high school seniors were off to begin the next chapter in their lives. While some chose to leave New York or even the East Coast, many opt to stay in the county. Here are some of the reasons that our local college students love Westchester.

24: "I love going to school around Westchester because there are enough restaurants here to keep me fat and happy."
—Alex Loscher, Fordham University

25: "Going to school in Westchester is amazing because I'm always guaranteed to run into someone I know, although sometimes that can be a bad thing."
—Julie Lloyd, Iona College

26: "Living at home while I'm in college is amazing because I never have to eat nasty cafeteria food for dinner. I can still count on my mom to feed me home-cooked meals."
—Louis Bousche, Iona College

27: "When everybody else has to move in and out for every holiday and semester, I get to just stay in one place and wait for everyone to visit me instead."
—Cesar Quintanilla, Westchester Community College

28: "Since I've lived here forever, I know all the back roads and can get to school in under five minutes—guaranteed."
—Stephanie Florich, Iona College

29: "I can always count on having to avoid people I know from high school in all my classes."
—Kiara McHugh, Westchester Community College

30: "Going to school in Westchester is the best and most economical. I save a ton of money on room and board by mooching off my parents."
—David Mereles, Mercy College

31: "I love going to school in Westchester because I have a ten-minute ride to school which allows me extra time for sleep. You gotta love it!"
—Nicole Miller, Mercy College

32: "Being at home for school is way better than having to put up with a psychotic roommate, in a room that's five-feet-by-five-feet. I'd never trade getting to sleep in my own bed in my own room."
—Alex Viera, Mercy College

33: "Going to school in Westchester is more than convenient and cheap since Mom is always right around the corner to ask for money."
—Lauren Harris, Purchase College

34: "Four years of high school isn't enough! Nothing beats getting the chance to go to college with all your old friends."
—Frank Corvino, Pace University

[52 REASONS TO LOVE WESTCHESTER]



35: *Because Aaron Copland's House Still Inspires As Much As His Music Does*

FINE, MAYBE IT'S NOT COMPOSER AARON Copland's physical house that's doing the heavy lifting—though his prairie-style home still exists in Cortlandt Manor much as he left it, with his work desk and his piano sitting side-by-side in his studio. Instead, it's the acclaimed ensemble group, Music from Copland House, that has done much to keep the composer's legacy alive and, this year, they have much to crow about.

Music from Copland House teamed up with the county to transform the historic Merestead Estate in Mount Kisco into an artistic hub for composers creating new American music. Musicians will live in the 26-room Georgian mansion, then every day they'll head off to the property's outbuildings, which all have been converted into studios, to work on their scores. At night, they might head over to the old cow barn to debut their new work to the public. (PBS's Fred Child and multi-Grammy winner Mark O'Connor already have visited for special events, and *New Yorker* music critic Alex Ross is scheduled to stop by this month.) So yes, a house can inspire American music—even if it just provides a quiet and pretty place to work, with an award-winning ensemble behind it pushing for something great.

■ Copland House at Merestead
455 Byram Lake Rd, Mount Kisco
(914) 788-4659; coplandhouse.org

36: Because We Take Our Cupcakes Very Seriously

LOOK OUT, WESTCHESTER CUPCAKE-A-TERIAS (AND THIS MEANS you, Flour & Sun)—things are getting hot! Jay Muse of Scarsdale's Lulu Cake Boutique is out to conquer the cupcake world with his upcoming spot in Tarrytown. As at Muse's original Lulu, his Tarrytown shop will feature picture-perfect, expertly crafted cakes all made from scratch with carefully sourced ingredients. Plus, unlike his phone-booth-sized Scarsdale nook, his Tarrytown spot will offer plenty of room to sit with fair-trade coffee or even a cool glass of farm-fresh milk. Expect chic digs and even chicer miniature cakes: milk mustache be damned, we can't wait.



Lulu's cupcakes are almost too pretty to eat.

37: BECAUSE WE GIVE

WESTCHESTERITES MAY BE KNOWN FOR HAVING MONEY, BUT WE DON'T ALL spend our paychecks on huge houses and Prada shoes. When it came time for the *Chronicle of Philanthropy* to compile "The Philanthropy 50," a list of Americans who gave the most in 2008, Westchesterites made two appearances on the list. (Unfortunately, Sidney E. Frank, a New Rochelle resident who was a mainstay of "The Philanthropy 50," died in 2006. Frank, a liquor importer, donated a whopping \$142 million in 2004, putting him at No. 9.)

David Rockefeller of Pocantico Hills was No. 15 on the list, donating more than \$137 million to causes and recipients like Harvard University, Stone Barns Center for Food and Agriculture, the New York Botanical Garden, and the Museum for African Art.

Jerome Fisher, co-founder and chairman emeritus of the White Plains-based Nine West Group, and his wife, Anne, gave away \$50 million to the University of Pennsylvania to build a biomedical research center, which is scheduled to open in 2010. The act put them at No. 33 on the list. We might have the second-highest incomes in New York State, but at least we put them to good use.

CUPCAKE PHOTO BY KRISTER ATLE

38: Because of Mount Vernon's Always-Contending Basketball Team

THE NEW YORK YANKEES. THE DETROIT RED WINGS. THE LOS ANGELES LAKERS. THE PITTSBURGH STEELERS. They all have winning traditions. It's assumed that, by season's end, each will be in contention. The same can be said for the Knights of Mount Vernon High School's basketball team.

The Knights, which breed great players, are a perennial powerhouse, not only in Westchester County, but in the state and, yes, the nation. Since 1967, the Mount Vernon basketball team has won 26 sectional titles and eight New York State titles. (Next best is Peekskill with 17 and five, respectively.) Countless players have gone on to play ball at the collegiate level, and 12 have made it to the National Basketball Association, including Ben Gordon, current member of the Detroit Pistons. Head Coach Bob Cimmino, who continues to produce winning basketball teams, is one of the most respected high school coaches in the country.

"Cimmino is one the true class gentleman of the game," says David Archer, president of the National High School Basketball Coaches and executive director of the Basketball Coaches Association of New York. "His temperament is what makes him so good. He understands the game, doesn't go bananas when something goes wrong, and keeps things in proper perspective. He is one of the great ones."

39: Because We Don't Have To Travel to the Bronx Zoo to See Real Wildlife

PITY THE POOR SOULS WHOSE ONLY BRUSHES WITH THE ANIMAL kingdom involve squirrels and pigeons. (In our minds, they're all just rats.) We haven't had the heart to tell them that, in addition to our trusty Labradors, we spend our days communing with chipmunks, raccoons, foxes, wild turkeys, and even bears, bobcats, and coyotes (though, thankfully, rarely). Look up and there's even more to marvel at: butterflies, geese, hawks, owls, and other rascally birds. You can howl with the wolves at the Wolf Conservation Center in South Salem, or set up camp and try and spot bald eagles at Croton Point Park. And, yes, if you happen to be a fan of squirrels and pigeons, we've got those, too.

"Westchester boasts a rich diversity of wildlife, with many species adapting well to living within close proximity of people," says Kurt Hundgen, executive director of the Greenburgh Nature Center. "Here, a few years back, we recorded one-hundred-twenty-four different species of birds, eighteen species of mammals, and fifteen species of reptiles and amphibians."

That's a lot of wildlife for one little (33-acre) spot—now imagine what's living in the whole county. There have been 361 different species of birds in our skies, and more than 200 types of fish swim in the Hudson. Don't even get us started on the deer. According to the *Huffington Post*, we have more than 60 white-tailed deer per square mile in one park area. Of course, such popularity comes at a price. According to Hundgen, "Conservationists in the county have worked hard to identify critical habitats and put protection measures into place."

MAD MEN PHOTO COURTESY OF RAINBOW MEDIA HOLDINGS LLC



40: BECAUSE THE DRAPERS LIVE HERE

Ossining has never looked so glamorous. While we don't begrudge *Mad Men's* Don and Betty Draper their unfaithful and unhappy marriage, we covet just about everything else about their lives: their picture-perfect 1960s clothes, their sleek mid-century furniture, their red-meat diets washed down with dry martinis. The fact that the series is set in Ossining, with frequent references to local landmarks—Phelps Memorial Hospital Center, Sing Sing Prison, Brookside Elementary School—makes the *Mad Men* world seem that much more attainable. In fact, after dinner tonight, we just might reach for some Maker's Mark and a Lucky Strike.

[52 REASONS TO LOVE WESTCHESTER]

41: *Because Westchester Is Gorgeous*



Half Moon Bay, Croton-on-Hudson

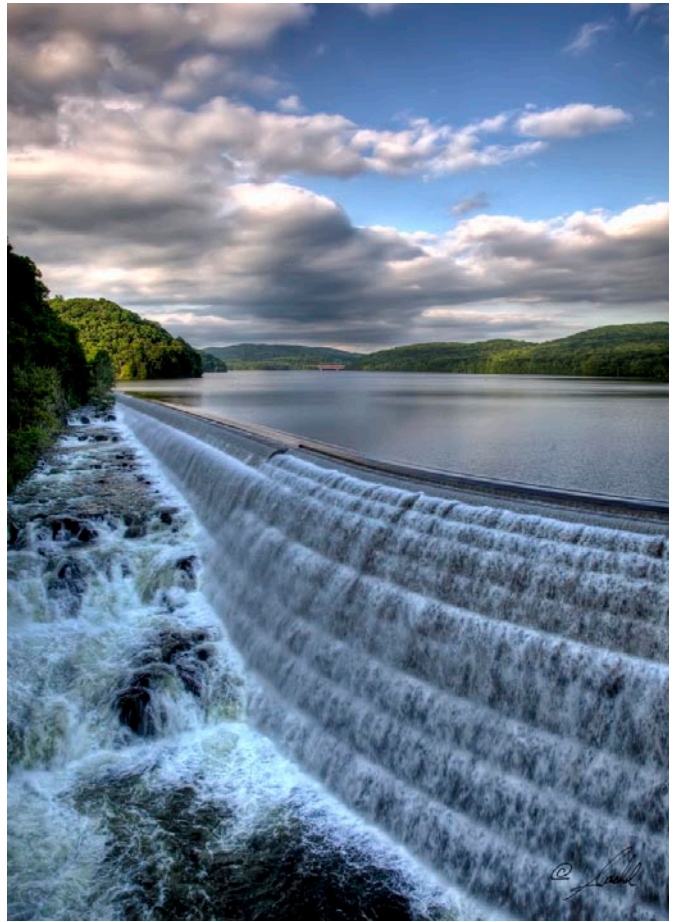


Stonewall Farm, Somers

THIS PAGE: PHOTOS SUBMITTED BY OUR READERS: STEPHEN SHOLINSKY (TOP); ELISA BRUNO-MIDILI (BOTTOM)



Riverfront Park, Peekskill



Croton Dam



Turkey Hill, Yorktown



Irvington Park



The View of the Hudson River from Yonkers

(THIS PAGE CLOCKWISE FROM TOP LEFT) PHOTOS SUBMITTED BY OUR READERS: JOSEPH MIRANDA; STEPHEN SHOLINSKY; ALEXANDRA DELL'ORTO; MARK FEASTER; KYMBERLY WEINER

[52 REASONS TO LOVE WESTCHESTER]



42: Because We Can Catch Up with Our Neighbors in People, Entertainment Weekly, Newsweek, and the New York Times

THERE ARE NOTABLE WESTCHESTER RESIDENTS EVERYWHERE you look. Turn on the Sunday-morning news, and you're likely to find an update with Secretary of State Hillary Clinton (Chappaqua), or maybe something about Secretary of the Treasury Timothy Geithner (Larchmont). Bookstores are lined with tomes by Don DeLillo (Bronxville), Ben Cheever (Pleasantville), Simon Schama (Briarcliff Manor), and Cynthia Ozick (New Rochelle).

Look for lighter entertainment, and you might find Vanessa Williams (Chappaqua) on *Ugly Betty* or David Letterman (North Salem) counting down his Top Ten List. Flip on the radio and hear Jay-Z or Beyoncé, who recently purchased a house in Scarsdale. Head to the movies,

and you'll find locals all over the marquee, be it with directors Ang Lee (Larchmont) and Lasse Hallström (Bedford) or actors like Robert Klein (Briarcliff Manor) and Ruby Dee Davis (New Rochelle). You can even find Westchesterites all over Twitter, with Martha Stewart and Rob Thomas tweeting from their homes in Bedford.

Westchester's bucolic scenery may give the impression that we're all sitting back and living the good life, but its residents are really out there and creating, entertaining, and changing the world. And, with an entire country to choose from, it really says something about the county that, when all these world-beaters choose to take a break, they come here to catch their breaths.

ANG LEE PHOTO COURTESY OF FOCUS FEATURES; BEYONCE PHOTO COURTESY OF SCREEN GEMS; JAY-Z PHOTO COURTESY OF PARAMOUNT CLASSICS; HILLARY CLINTON PHOTO BY ALBERT H. TEICH

43: Because We've Got Every Kind of Landscape You Can Imagine

A fan of the beach? Pack your sunscreen and hit the dunes in Rye. You prefer the mountains? Swap the sandy towels for hiking boots and trek to the top of Anthony's Nose. Maybe you'd rather trade in the scenic vistas of the country for the hustle-bustle of city life. If so, hit the streets of White Plains and Yonkers and you'll be happy to hear the rush of traffic and feel the hard pavement beneath your feet. We've got wetlands, woodlands, hills, valleys, untamed wilderness, manicured lawns, the River, the Sound, city streets, farmland, and everything in-between all rolled up into one county. Living here, you don't have to choose: slink into one of our trendy bars and feel cosmopolitan while sipping on martinis one day, then rustle on the jodhpurs and hang out with the horsey set the next. You can feel like you're living a double—or triple, or quadruple—life, without the whole remembering-your-alias-and-subterfuge hassle.

44: BECAUSE DOWNTOWN WHITE PLAINS IS OUR VERSION OF THE CITY THAT NEVER SLEEPS

THE SONG "NEW YORK, NEW YORK" FAMOUSLY proclaims that if you make it there you can make it anywhere—but who wants to go through the hassle of going all the way *there* when you have downtown White Plains *here*? That goes double if you're planning on making it a late night. You want to spend that time partying, not on the train. If you're looking for a sleepless night, there's no better destination than White Plains's Mamaroneck Avenue. Stop in for a drink at one—or all—of these late-night bars:

- Black Bear Saloon, 166 Mamaroneck Ave (914) 422-3270; blackbearwp.com
- Brazen Fox, 175 Mamaroneck Ave (914) 358-5911 thebrazenfox.com
- Elements Food & Spirits, 161 Mamaroneck Ave (914) 358-4930; elementswHITEPLAINS.com
- Haiku Asian Bistro, 149 Mamaroneck Ave (914) 644-8887; haikuasianbistro.com
- James Joyce Public House & Restaurant 166B Mamaroneck Avenue (914) 397-1077; jamesjoycerestaurant.com
- Lazy Boy Saloon & Lazy Lounge, 152 & 154 Mamaroneck Ave (914) 761-0272; lazyboysaloon.com, lazyloungeNY.com
- Porter House Bar, 169 Mamaroneck Ave (914) 831-5663; porterhousebar.com

45: Because Where Else Can You Ride Roller Coasters at the Government's Expense?

NOWHERE. PLAYLAND IS THE ONLY GOVERNMENT-OWNED and -operated amusement park in the country. (You can't say that about Coney Island, which is just as historic but owned by—what else?—a real estate development company.) Sure, there's an admission fee to get in—but, in the end, isn't that just like paying yourself? We'll gladly use that as justification for a few go-rounds on the Dragon Coaster.



[52 REASONS TO LOVE WESTCHESTER]

46: BECAUSE IN WESTCHESTER, CELEBRITY CHEFS ARE EVERYWHERE

LET THE REST OF AMERICA GAWK AT CULINARY CELEBS ON THE TUBE; we in Westchester are tripping on 'em.

While diminutive, soft-spoken Dan Barber steals the show as the national figurehead for more ethical foodways (earning his family's Manhattan Blue Hill a coveted royal visit by the Obamas), their iconic Blue Hill at Stone Barns in Pocantico Hills remains a synthesis of everything chic in restaurants today: heirloom, heritage, and an extreme stinginess with food miles. And, as every food magazine on earth has already noted, his food's not too bad, either.

Meanwhile—one of the few, the proud—an *Iron Chef* challenger who actually managed an upset against the winningest chef on the show (Chef Bobby Flay) is still in Yonkers, happily churning out some of Westchester's favorite meals. Chef Peter Kelly, whose epic TV win over Flay had Westchester weeping as though it were the 1980 U.S.A. Olympic hockey game against the U.S.S.R., is still rocking those triumphant cowboy ribeyes at X20, which (not surprisingly) was voted *Zagat's* most popular Westchester/Hudson Valley restaurant in the 2009/10 issue. And, unlike Flay—that orangey, Danny Partridge lookalike—you'll often find Kelly at his restaurants, earnestly greeting TV fans in the flesh.

Then, of course, there's that darling of food editors everywhere, Chef Andy Nusser of Tarry Lodge, Casa Mono, and Bar Jamon, whose nice-guy affability disguises a serious culinary mind. (He won a coveted James Beard "Best New Chef: New York City" award in 2002 for his work at Bar Jamon, which he co-owns with Tarry Lodge partners Mario Batali, Joseph Bastianich, and Nancy Selzer.)

Finally, if your tastes run toward the B-list, there's that addictive squirm-fest of *The Next Food Network Star*, on which Brett August, executive sous chef of Rye Brook's Doral Arrowwood, slogged it out with Michael Proietti of New Rochelle's Radisson Hotel for a chance at a show. Spoiler alert: turns out the panel awarding the slot was—to use Proietti's word—a little "judgy."

47: Because We Shop In Our Towns, Not Just in Our Malls

WHAT SOUNDS MORE APPEALING TO YOU: BROWSING the mass-produced clothes at Banana Republic and stopping for a bite afterward at chain-restaurant PF Chang's, or sifting through the one-of-a-kind antiques in Tarrytown, then heading to the locally sourced refreshments at the Sweet Grass Grill? We thought so. While the mall and its lazier cousin—online shopping—will always have a place in our lives, it's a relief that the mall is not our only option for shopping and socialization. After all, anyone in any town across America can drive to a mall—and we're not just anyone. There's only one Bronxville. There's only one Hastings-on-Hudson. There's only one Katonah. There's only one Larchmont. And they're all different from each other, and they give us endless reasons to go out on a Saturday afternoon. Here are some downtowns worthy of whiling away an afternoon in, and some must-hit spots along the way.

■ **Bronxville:** Pondfield Road

Shop: Plaza Too for shoes, Maison Rouge for home accessories, Try and Buy for toys, and the Womrath Bookshop for books.

Eat: Haiku for pan-Asian, Blue Moon for Mexican, and Slave to the Grind for coffee.

■ **Hastings-on-Hudson:** Warburton Avenue

Shop: Expressions for funky gifts, Galapagos Books for international books, Indigo NY for women's clothes.

Eat: Comfort Lounge for gourmet take-out, or venture off Warburton to Buffet de la Gare for superlative French fare.

■ **Katonah:** Katonah Avenue

Shop: Boo Girls for children's clothes, Eiluj for cosmetics, Offerings for fun gifts, and Squires for men's clothing.

Eat: NoKa Joe's for coffee, candy, and scones from Balthazar.

■ **Larchmont:** Palmer Avenue

Shop: Anelle Gandelman Fine Art for art, Bella Fiora for clothes, Lorilyn & Co for children's clothing, Pink on Palmer for cosmetics, and the Voracious Reader for children's books.

Eat: Harbour House Coffee Shop for diner fare, Lusardi's for Northern Italian food, Turquoise for Turkish.

■ **Mount Kisco:** East Main Street

Shop: Acadia on Main for clothes, Beehive Co-Op for artisan gifts, Casa Linda Interiors for home accessories, Juliet Lingerie & Swimwear for bathing suits and undergarments.

Eat: Blue for Asian fusion, Café of Love for soups and sandwiches, F.A.B for American and French food, Q for barbecue.

■ **Rye:** Purchase Street

Shop: Arcade Booksellers for books, Blush for cosmetics, Panache for women's clothing, Parkers for luggage, and Lester's for children's clothes.

Eat: Andy's Pure Food for organic goodies, Frankie & Johnnie's for steaks, Longford's for ice cream, and Water Moon for Pan-Asian.

■ **Tarrytown:** Main Street

Shop: Belkind Bigi for mid-century furniture, Gallery Du Soleil for beautiful paintings, Timeless Seasons for gifts, Viviana for clothes and jewelry

Eat: Letteris Gyro for Greek food, Sweet Grass Grill for locally sourced burgers, Chiboust for outrageous desserts.



DAN BARBER PHOTO BY NICHOLAS BASILION; PETER KELLY PHOTO BY HALINA SABATH

48: Because Film Fans Never Have to Drive More Than 10 Miles to Get a Meeting with A Director

WE KNOW WESTCHESTER'S BEEN GOOD TO FILMMAKERS (SEE NO. 8), BUT IT'S also pretty convenient for film fans. Cinephiles looking to schmooze with big-name directors don't have to worry about trying to elbow their ways onto locked-up Hollywood backlots or crashing red-carpet premieres. Instead, our art-house cinemas host a regular stream of famous filmmakers. And, for convenience's sake, we have two of them, one for south-county residents and one closer to the north.

The Picture House Regional Film Center in Pelham has been screening films practically since the dawn of cinema, starting with the silent movies of the 1920s. Movie buffs get a behind-the-scenes look with the cinema's "Reel Insider" series, for which directors come to chat about their films with notable film critics like *Rolling Stone's* Peter Travers, *Entertainment Weekly's* Owen Gleiberman, or *New York's* David Edelstein. Recent visitors include indie buzzed-about directors Scott Hicks (*Shine*,

The Boys Are Back), Sophie Barthes (*Cold Souls*), and Duncan Jones (*Moon*). And forget the sticky Raisinettes—Reel Insider events begin with a wine-and-cheese reception.

Of course, those who live closer to Pleasantville and its Jacob Burns Film Center are no strangers to visiting filmmakers. Proof? Jason Reitman (*Juno*, *Up in the Air*), Whit Stillman (*The Last Days of Disco*), R.J. Cutler (*The September Issue*), Nora Ephron (*Julie & Julia*), Danny Boyle (*Slumdog Millionaire*), and Werner Herzog (*Encounters at the End of the World*) have all



Dev Patel and Danny Boyle visit the Jacob Burns Film Center to support their *Slumdog Millionaire*.

showed up recently to screen their films and submit themselves to Q&As. Just down the block from the theater, the brand-new, modern-in-every-way Media Arts Lab hosts classes teaching future filmmakers how to make their own movies using professional-grade, state-of-the-art equipment.

Just add popcorn.

- **The Picture House**, 175 Wolfs Ln, Pelham (914) 738-7337; thepicturehouse.org
- **Jacob Burns Film Center**, 364 Manville Rd, Pleasantville (914) 747-5555; burnsfilmcenter.org
- **Media Arts Lab**, 405 Manville Rd, Pleasantville (914) 773-7663; burnsfilmcenter.org

49: BECAUSE THERE'S NOT A SINGLE OLIVE GARDEN IN THE ENTIRE COUNTY

DEV PATEL AND DANNY BOYLE PHOTO BY ED CODY COURTESY OF JACOB BURNS FILM CENTER; BILL CLINTON AND HILLARY CLINTON PHOTOS BY ANTHONY CORREIA



50: Because Local Politics Makes Life Interesting

WHO NEEDS TO FOLLOW THE MACHINATIONS of elected officials in Washington on CNN, MSNBC, and Fox News when we've got a steady stable of colorful local politicians right here in our own backyard? Indeed, our cast of characters could give Nancy Pelosi and Joe Biden a run for their money. We've got the innovative and inimitable Greenburgh Town Supervisor Paul Feiner; the disgraced former North Salem Town Supervisor Paul Greenwood; County Executive Andy Spano and his political nemesis, his son Dave (see No. 4); County Board of Legislators Chair Bill Ryan and his cloud of controversies (e.g., a failed attempt to garner a 40-percent pay hike, a criminal investigation of his chief adviser, and an alleged act of retaliation against the Board's vice chair—who opposed Ryan's pay hike—by having his office cut in half); the perennial rematches and recounts between State Senator Andrea Stewart-Cousins and her predecessor, former State Senator Nick Spano (no relation to Andy!); our former DA-turned-TV-judge Jeanine Pirro and her walk-in-closet full of scandals and skeletons (e.g., husband Al's extramarital affairs, conviction for tax fraud, adult love child, and alleged mob ties, and her alleged wire-tapping plot against him); and, last but not least, our down-to-earth next-door (in Chappaqua) neighbors, Bill & Hill.

[52 REASONS TO LOVE WESTCHESTER]

51: Because, Despite the Economy, Westchester Is Still Open for Business

BUSINESSES IN WESTCHESTER ARE NOT JUST OPEN—THEY'RE OPENING. YES, despite all the conventional wisdom, the pessimistic news reports, and the chilly economic climate, people here are still willing to take a risk and go after that American Dream. Lots of them, too. (As of press time, 2,499 businesses—including e-businesses—have opened in Westchester since January 1, 2009.) In movie cliché terms, are their plans so crazy that they just might work? Stop into some of the spots that have opened in the county since the economy went south.

Acadia on Main

115 E Main St, Mount Kisco
(914) 666-6800
acadiaonmain.com

Bistro Rollin

142 Fifth Ave, Pelham
(914) 633-0780
bistrorollin.com

Chat American Grill

1 Christie Pl, Scarsdale
(914) 722-4000
chatamericangrill.com

Churchill's of Mount Kisco

41 S Moger Ave
Mount Kisco
(914) 930-4553
churchillsmountkisco.com

Clementine

29 King St, Chappaqua
(914) 238-2564

Crave

48 N Main St, Port Chester
(914) 305-1600

Cravings Eats & Treats

549 N State Rd, Briarcliff
(914) 944-4622

Dejà Vu Again

108 Adee St, Port Chester
(914) 481-1160

Elemental Design Concepts

197 E Post Rd, White Plains
(914) 422-3323

Frank Pepe Pizzeria

Napoletana
1955 Central Ave, Yonkers
(914) 367-0055
pepespizzeria.com

Il Castello

327 Mamaroneck Ave
Mamaroneck
(914) 835-9066

It's SWAK

2144 Albany Post Rd,
Montrose
(914) 402-5756
itsswak.com

Kitch n' Kaffe

800 N Bedford Rd
Bedford Hills
(914) 218-8860
kitch-n-kaffe.com

Klaff's of Scarsdale

341 Central Ave
Scarsdale
(914) 740-1800; klaffs.com

La Herradura

406 Mamaroneck Ave
Mamaroneck
No phone as of press time

Limoncello

974 E Boston Post Rd
Mamaroneck
(914) 630-2311
limoncellony.com

Masala Kraft Café

206 E Hartsdale Ave
Hartsdale
(914) 722-4300
masalakraftcafe.com

Mayland & Co

20 N Salem Rd, Cross River
(914) 997-3550

My Essentials

11 Addison St, Larchmont
(914) 834-2220

NEO World Bistro &

Sushi Bar
69 S Moger Ave
Mount Kisco
(914) 244-9711

NinaMaria's Italian

Restaurant & Bar
301 Columbus Ave
Valhalla
(914) 358-5000

No Stone Unturned

96 Kraft Ave
Bronxville
(914) 779-0109

Pelham Tile & Marble

84 Lincoln Ave
Pelham
(914) 355-4847

The Rec Room

1 Cedar St
Dobbs Ferry
(914) 231-7428
therecroomshop.com

Rhythm in Rye Too

85 Purchase St, Rye
(914) 921-1117
rirtoo.com

Ron Black's

181 Mamaroneck Ave
White Plains
No phone as of press time

Sliding Door Company

20 Jones St
New Rochelle
(914) 235-3235
nyslidingdoor.com

TransForm

20 Jones St
New Rochelle
(914) 500-1000
gotransform.com

2 Broadway

2 Broadway
Pleasantville
(914) 747-1000
2broadway.com

The Village Soccer Shop

3 Cedar St
Dobbs Ferry
(914) 231-7577
thevillagesoccershop.com

Viviana

28 Main St
Tarrytown
(914) 332-1110

Yoshino Asian Fusion

562 Gramatan Ave
Mount Vernon
(914) 699-9888
yoshinoaf.com

Z Life Denim Lounge

138B S Ridge St
Rye Brook
(914) 937-5433
zlifedenimlounge.com



52: Because We Now Have Two Skylines You Can See from More Than Two Miles Away

WESTCHESTER IS MOVING UP IN THE world—literally, or at least vertically. Whereas once the county had no skyline to speak of, now it has two, given to us by—of all people—Donald Trump (and his local partner, Louis Cappelli). The Trump Plaza in New Rochelle reaches more than 400 feet into the air, just slightly taller than the 35-story Trump Tower in White Plains. But it's Cappelli's gleaming, glass Ritz-Carlton, Westchester, in White Plains, standing at a majestic 44 stories, that really gives our skyline a noteworthy, modern edge. The shine from the tower in daylight and the iridescent blue light it gives off in the nighttime acts like a beacon calling shoppers to White Plains. (And the tower is a good landmark to use to chart your progress in the rush-hour traffic on I-287.) We hear the view from 42, the Ritz's top-level restaurant, is stunning—but we prefer to look at it from the outside.



PHOTOS THIS PAGE COURTESY OF CAPPELLI ENTERPRISES