

A GUIDE TO GALAS & CHARITY BALLS • LOCAL TRENDS IN REAL ESTATE

Hudson Valley

10 Terrific Home Towns

COLD SPRING • HAVERSTRAW
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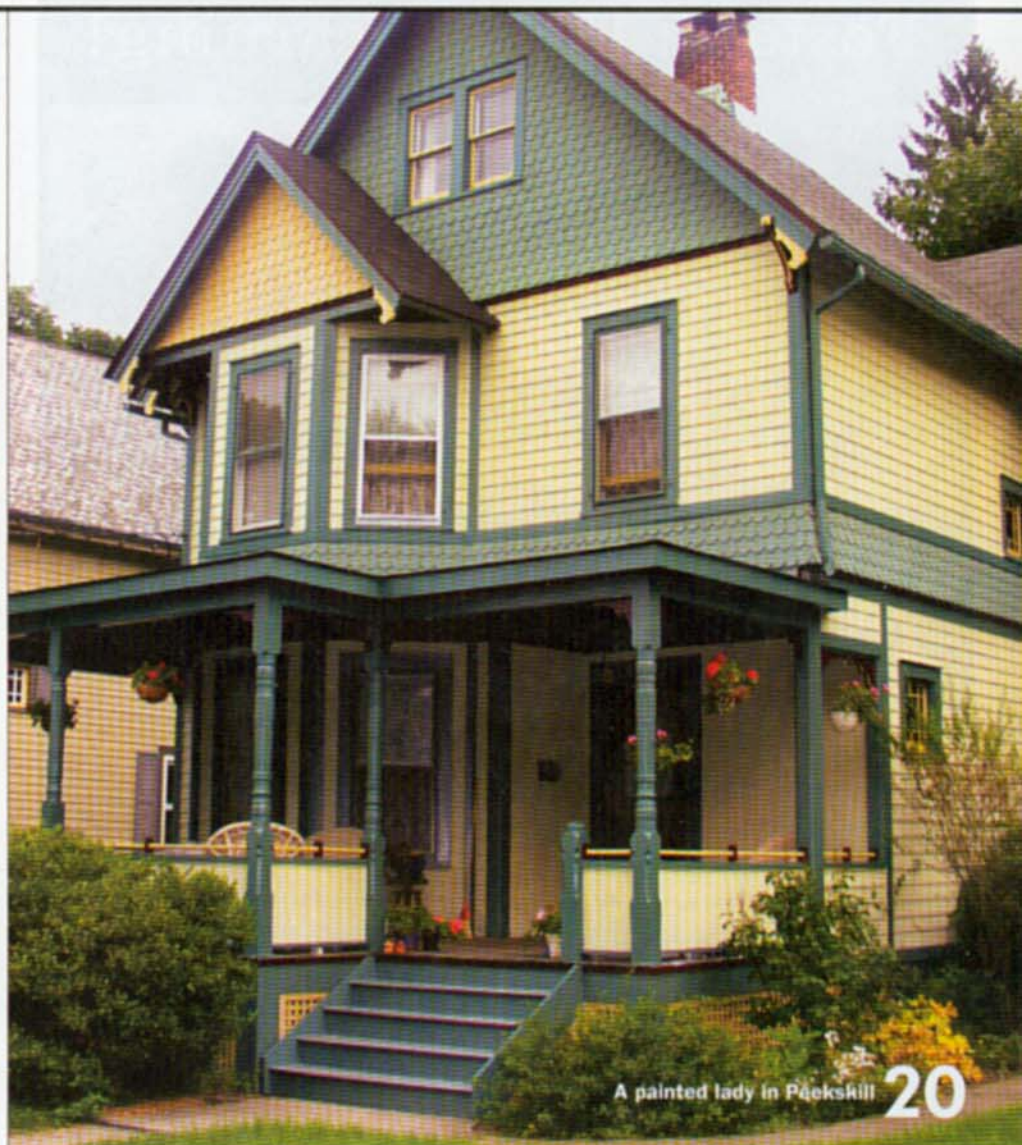
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Marching to the beat of a Japanese drum in Westchester; the Supremes' spangly outfits take center stage in Albany; and an early breath of spring in Troy. *By Polly Sparling*

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On the cover: Livin' it up in Cold Spring. PHOTOGRAPH BY FRANK ROBERTS



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Downtown for the arts • Victorian bargains

"Peekskill" and "preservation" have become nearly synonymous — there's a big focus on maintaining and renovating this riverfront city's historic 19th-century character. And nowadays, a growing number of artists call Peekskill home. This is largely due to progressive city policies and zoning laws that permit artists to live and work in downtown spaces — many of them formerly unused second-floor lofts above storefronts.

"It's been a wonderful way to get residents back into the downtown area," says Sally Forrest, executive administrator of the Peekskill Arts Council, a grassroots community organization run mostly by volunteers. "At least 100 artists now live or work in Peekskill studios in the area known as the Downtown Artist District, and the numbers keep growing," she says. "Yet it's interesting because it's not like you see artists everywhere. Their presence isn't always obvious because many of their studios are upstairs in commercial buildings."

The city today is a vibrant combination of Peekskill born-and-bred locals and newcomers, many of whom make the 40-mile trip on Metro-North trains to Manhattan. Today, the city's population is about 22,000, and it's among the fastest growing of all Westchester communities.

Lovers of the outdoors relish a newly redeveloped recreational area known as Riverfront Green Park, plus the nearby Blue Mountain Reservation, a 1,600-acre park with 15 miles of hiking trails. Kayaking in the Hudson is also a popular pastime.

As for houses, "Peekskill is one of the only relatively inexpensive places remaining in Westchester," says Forrest, who has lived in the area for 20 years. More than 225 Victorian houses have been renovated in the city, where the average home is valued in the \$225,000 range.

The city's cultural jewels include the Paramount Center for the Arts, a classic 1930s movie theater recently restored to its former glory, as well as a new museum, the Hudson Valley Center for Contemporary Art. And where there are artists, there are bound to be galleries. At least half a dozen are now open, helping downtown Peekskill come alive and thrive.

WESTCHESTER

Peekskill

Victorian fancies are still affordable in downtown Peekskill

