

WHERE TO WORK OUT—32 TOP HEALTH CLUBS

WESTCHESTER

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GREAT PLACES TO LIVE

EASTCHESTER ■ MT. KISCO ■ NEW ROCHELLE ■ NORTH SALEM ■ OSSINING
PEEKSKILL ■ VALHALLA ■ VISTA ■ WHITE PLAINS ■ YONKERS



**THE 8 WONDERS
OF WESTCHESTER**
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Loveliest Buildings

MY MOTHER'S MURDER
A South Salem Story

OCTOBER 2004



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Westchester's Most
Affordable—and Most
Colorful—Town

PEEKSKILL

PEEKSKILL CHANGES AS CONTINUALLY

as the nearby Hudson River. Within the last few years, the downtown area has been rejuvenated as an arts district with work/live space for about 100 artists and the waterfront park was renovated. Plus new residents are flocking to the city, bringing with them a lot of enthusiasm for paint, wallpaper and flower bulbs. Bridgette Bacon of American Family Realty has lived in Peekskill for 42 years. "What we're seeing now in the middle of Peekskill is a resurgence," she says. "We're re-facing buildings, we're bringing original conditions back to the Victorians, we're building it up." There's another \$48 million in riverfront renovations on the way.

What's interesting, though, is who is doing all this work. "In the last year, 80 percent of the people I've been dealing with are either newly married, middle-aged couples, or older people, all with no kids," she says. Many of them are looking not just for an affordable place to live, but for an opportunity to profit from home ownership, according to Bacon. "If you're slightly handy, a little

Martha Stewart, if you can paint and clean and decorate, you've got it made because you've got a chance to make \$50,000 to \$125,000 on a purchase within 30 to 45 days."

For those less interested in the Martha Stewart thing, there is Riverbend, a community of 200 town homes and duplex apartments now under construction by Ginsburg Development Companies on what is described by GDC Development Director Adam Ginsburg as "a beautiful piece of property that was originally owned by the Franciscan Sisters, who still have a newly restored and historically significant facility nearby." Prices start at \$299,900 for a one-bedroom duplex. In addition to direct river views, amenities include a clubhouse, a pool and waterfront park, as well as an easy walk to the Peekskill train station.

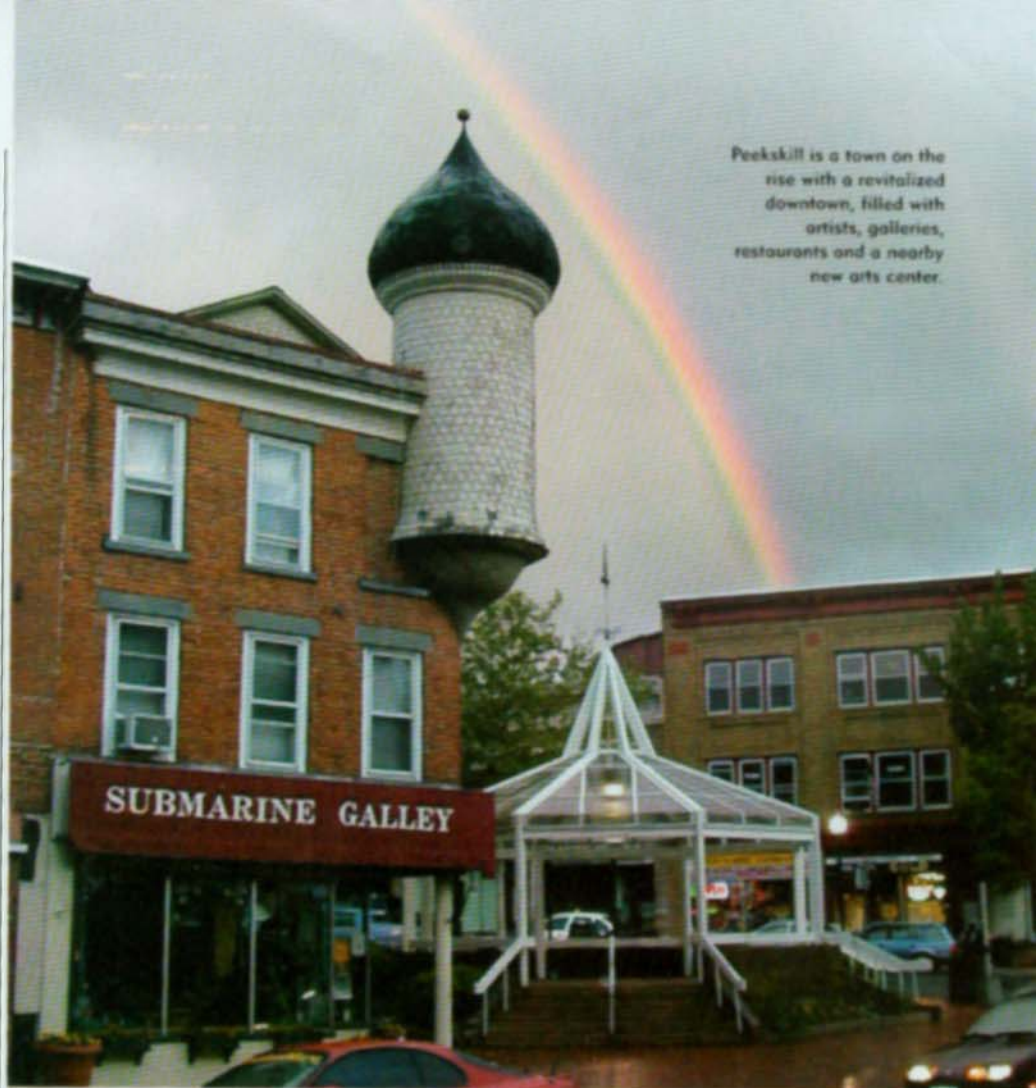
The price range for existing single-family homes is \$300,000 to \$700,000, "depending on whether it's new construction, old and renovated, or old and disheveled," Bacon says. This makes Peekskill one of the most affordable areas in Westchester.

It's also one of the most colorful. Larry D'Amico was one of the pioneers of the Peekskill Arts District. In 1992, he bought an 1845 Greek Revival building that had stood vacant since 1978, renovated it and turned it into a live-in workspace for himself and his wife, Sone Tower, who, like Larry, is a painter. Today, as a direct result of the city's decision to encourage artists' live-in workspaces in downtown Peekskill, "there are nine functioning art galleries in town,"

Quick Facts About PEEKSKILL

Population	22,441
Median Age	35.2
Median Household Income	\$47,177
School District	Peekskill
K-12 Enrollment	2,896
Education Expenditures per Student	\$15,132
% HS Grads to 4-Yr. College	40
Minutes to Grand Central by Train	61-69

Useless but Interesting Factoid: The Lincoln Exedra on South Street overlooks the old train station site where then-President-elect Abraham Lincoln made his only living visit to Westchester County in 1861.



Peekskill is a town on the rise with a revitalized downtown, filled with artists, galleries, restaurants and a nearby new arts center.

D'Amico says. "The two coffee houses are packed on the weekends. There's music going on. It makes for an interesting mix in the town."

One Station Plaza features jazz, the Sycamore Gallery/Coffee House has an open mike on Sundays, and the Peekskill Coffee House offers folk music as well as what Bacon calls "the best coffee in the world."

And don't forget that big river rolling by to the west. John Hoek, who has lived near Peekskill Hospital for 27 years and boats on the Hudson, points out that the city built a new boat ramp and fixed up the park to take advantage of that resource. "From Peekskill Bay up to the Bear Mountain Bridge is very scenic," he reports, "especially in the fall."

Just because many of the new residents don't have kids doesn't mean that Peekskill ignores those who do. There are six schools in the Peekskill School District. A small portion of South Peekskill is in the Hendrick Hudson school district which is in Cortlandt.

All of these towns appeal to me in one way or another. I was agog at the restored homes in Park Hill, the river views in Ossining, the horse farms in North Salem, and the neighborliness of Westminster Ridge. I loved the rolling countryside of Vista, the hopping downtown in Mt. Kisco, and the Kensico Dam Plaza in Valhalla. New Rochelle's waterfront has always been a favorite place of mine, and I want to play golf at Lake Isle in Eastchester. I'd even love to relive my Bohemian youth by living in a loft in the Peekskill Arts District.

I've lived in three different towns in the county over the last 25 years and have enjoyed them all. My look into the diverse places profiled here, though, showed me 10 other communities where I'd like to move. Boy, will my wife be surprised. ☺

Although Dave Donelson now lives in West Harrison, he grew up in St. Joseph, Missouri, which is a small town totally unlike any place in Westchester County.