

January 1, 2018

Getting to Know Northeast Dutchess County Rural Refinement in Milerton, Amenia, Millbrook

By Anya Jaremcko-Greenwold

the music cellar.

Northeast Dutchess County is home to a lot more than gorgeous fall foliage and rolling hills. Farmers tend to their livestock and horses graze, but New York City (under two hours away)

Samantha Bea at The Music Cellar in Millerton.

also ushers in scores of weekend visitors seeking rural respite amongst a charming trio of small towns: Millerton, Amenia, and Millbrook. Connected by Route 44, these three communities offer farm-to-table delicacies, unique shopping opportunities, and indie theaters to rival what you might find in a big city—without any traffic jams. Parks, golf clubs, and a recreational rail trail round out an endless slate of outdoor activities, and new businesses spring up often as the towns continue to swell in size and popularity.



With less than 1,000 permanent residents, Millerton was once a junction where three railroads converged; when the trains departed in 1980, the local economy faltered and many

farms shut down. Eventually, moneyed second-home owners began to move in, as well as those who considered Millerton a convenient alternative to the pricier Connecticut. The

hamlet was revived.

Should you crave a caffeinated pick-me-up, Irving Farm Coffee House, on Main Street, is the place to go. The coffee comes fresh from a roastery in town, and over the past year, Irving Farms has grown considerably; the Millerton location is now one of nine stores, but still the only choice outside Manhattan. New on their menu is cold brew (in addition to iced coffee),

both a classic and seasonal blend. Those who prefer tea can head over to Harney & Sons,

another outlet with a sister site in New York. They offer 250 varieties of tea in their tasting room, plus a lunch menu in the back lounge. Good grub can be found at Main Street eateries like 52 Main, a tapas restaurant, and Oakhurst Diner, a retro boxcar-style joint dating back to the 1940s.

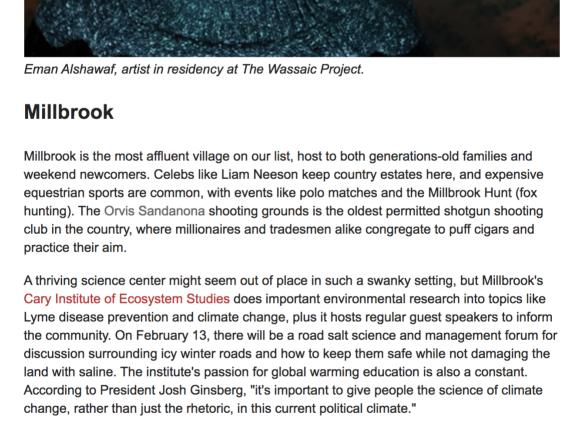


music and magic shows, to keep early parkers busy. Nostalgia is heightened by carhop service, with food brought directly to your vehicle, and in addition to new releases the drive-

When We See Things."

in hosts a Throwback Thursday, during which classic films are screened.

A small hamlet in the town of Amenia called Wassaic is home to the Wassaic Project, a nonprofit born of a 2008 arts festival that still happens every August. It has since grown to become a year-round organization with rotating gallery exhibitions and art workshops. Housed inside a formidable, milky-white former grain mill, the facility offers artist residencies in the summer and winter; chosen residents are primarily visual creators, though coexecutive director Jeff Barnett-Winsby hopes to develop a dance residency in the future. These artists engage with nearby public schools, creating curriculums with the goal being cultural exposure for local kids. At the end of this month, the Wassaic Project will host its Mill Warming event at the Maxon Mills, a new winter exhibition called "What We Don't Realize"





the zoo's livestream of the pandas on their website.

straight out of a fairytale, built entirely from reclaimed materials. The castle offers several B&B options, ranging from the Dungeon Room (spooky!) to The Cottage (much cozier!)

If you're looking to carouse, hit up the Taconic Distillery (just outside town, in Stanfordville) for some barrel-aged spirits, or try Millbrook Vineyards & Winery; since last year, the winery doubled the size of its tasting room, added a space for reserve tastings, and opened up a Vineyard Tap Room with wine by the glass on draft. In the summer it hosts Food Truck Fridays, where trucks bearing tasty treats roll up to the winery and help revelers soak up all that vino. Just a hop, skip, and a jump from the winery is Wing's Castle, a strange structure



"melting pot" atmosphere, with so many weekenders from New York City and large communities of Spanish speakers and international families. Partake of more retail therapy at Absolutely Wild Home, an upscale home furnishings store that opened last December, or Arrowsmith Forge, where custom metal designs like steel chandeliers and wrought-iron gates are produced. It remains one of the few ornamental and architectural forges in the Hudson Valley.

sweaters, all unisex, in every color of the rainbow); a percentage of proceeds go to an LGBT organization. Adams moved to Millbrook from Germany and says she relishes the town's

Another recent addition to Millbrook is Maura's Kitchen, a family-owned restaurant that prides itself on providing "the comfort of a mother's home cooked meal" and serving "feel good food." If you crave more sophisticated cuisine, Cafe Les Baux has eclectic French nosh and Charlotte's serves European fare in a rural setting, with outdoor garden seating in the warmer months and a cozy fireplace in winter. Slammin' Salmon serves lunch with an "old school" gourmet shop feel; specialties include hand-cut aged steaks, artisan cheese,

the warmer months and a cozy fireplace in winter. Slammin' Salmon serves lunch with an "old school" gourmet shop feel; specialties include hand-cut aged steaks, artisan cheese, and the freshest fish around.

Whether you're strolling down the Harlem Valley Rail Trail via Millerton, snuggling up with a

sweetheart at the drive-in, or hanging with the animals at Millbrook's Trevor Zoo, you'll never

be starved for amusement or culture in Northeast Dutchess County.