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Aisled capital

Thanks to excellent venues, Kingston is a wedding mecca



Nuptials at the Hutton Brickyards.

by Zac Shaw

THOUGH IT'S NOT officially designated as such, the Hudson Valley is undoubtedly in the running for wedding capital of New York State. No city is arguably more of-the-moment than Kingston, which also happens to be one of the hottest spots in the area to host a wedding. The city sits at the junction of peak trendiness and convenient distance from New York City.

Let us do you a wedding favor and suggest you consider Kingston as the destination of your celebration.

Kingston's rising reputation for having a thriving matrimonial industry is more than serendipity. Each year, as Kingston plays host to more weddings, an ecosystem of local businesses, offering specialized wedding services has expanded. This growth has in turn further attracted couples to choose Kingston as their wedding location. It's a cyclical process - a positive feedback loop of growth that continually reinforces Kingston's status as a premier

wedding destination and simultaneously provides a significant boost to the local economy.

It doesn't hurt that the city exudes a blend of natural charm and historical richness. Its character is revealed in the diverse array of venues - whether you fancy a quaint, rustic barn or a grand, 19th-century mansion. Converted industrial buildings, relics of the city's vibrant past, now stand as trendy wedding venues offering an urban, edgy charm. Luxury glampyards along the riverbanks provide idyllic pastoral settings.

These venues do more than just lend an aesthetic. They whisper stories of the city's past into the collective memory of the wedding celebration.

Kingston is also home to a thriving food and beverage scene that emphasizes the farm-to-table ethos, with a blend of high-end dining experiences and down-to-earth, reasonably-priced comfort food. From caterers to restaurants, it won't take many tastings before you realize that there's a bounty of polished culinary gems in the area. The wedding caterers in the area are top-shelf and uniquely creative.

You could fill your entire bar with local spirits, wines and beers, and your whole menu with locally- and sustainably-sourced edibles.

For post-reception partying, Kingston offers something for every reveler, from chic speakeasies to punk-rock dive bars. When it's time to crash, you've got your pick of boutique lodging and Airbnbs, as well as affordable hotels and motels.

But for everything Kingston has to offer, the venues themselves are the star of the show (second to the couple getting married, of course). While the city is surrounded by numerous world-class wedding venues within an hour's drive, this article will shine the spotlight on venues within or near Kingston.

Hutton Brickyards

The Hutton Brickyards is a historical jewel, an architectural testament to the city's industrial heritage. Once a thriving brick manufacturing site, the establishment has metamorphosed into an epic wedding venue that elegantly blends its rich and rusty history with vibes of contemporary luxury. Its proximity to

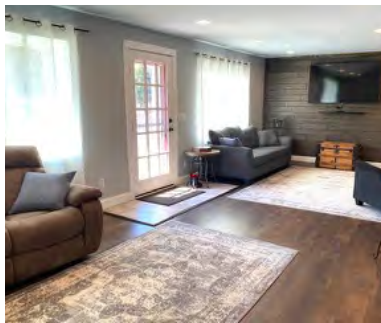


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The Senate Garage makes a lovely setting for a wedding.

the riverside enhances its allure, offering guests an unmatched view of the rippling Hudson (and its occasional passing boats) as they partake in the revelries. This isn't just a wedding venue: It's a complex of wedding venues amongst other attractions.

Sprawling over 73 scenic acres of riverside property, the Hutton Brickyards is equipped with both indoor and outdoor facilities designed to cater to a diverse array of wedding needs. The Butler Pavilion, the largest outdoor event space, can comfortably accommodate up to 4000 guests (that's a big wedding). Smaller yet equally charming venue options include the Hutton Hall and the Lidgerwood Pavilion, each capable of housing a sizable gathering. Furthermore, the property is punctuated with 30 guest cabins, the Cottage, and get-ready suites, all of which are designed to provide privacy and water views. "Casual elegance" is a phrase that easily comes to mind on this property.

In 2022, the sister property, Edgewood Mansion, was introduced. A regal edifice constructed in 1873 for renowned brick manufacturer John H. Cordts, Edgewood

Mansion has maintained much of its Second Empire-style exterior. Its interior, however, has been revamped to present a juxtaposition of old and new, featuring a dozen guest rooms painted in warm whites and French grays, with 19th-century details accenting contemporary designs.

Senate Garage

The Senate Garage in uptown Kingston, known for its rich architectural design and historical significance, is a unique spot to tie the knot. Once an actual garage, this venue has been thoughtfully transformed to combine elements of its original industrial charm with modern aesthetics. Exposed brick, steel beams, and large casement windows add an urban yet romantic touch, harkening back to the past while fitting comfortably in the contemporary world.

The venue stands out not only for its structure but also for its surroundings. It's nestled amidst a collection of historic buildings, each with its own story to tell. The Senate House State Historic Site, one of the oldest public buildings in America, sits adjacent to the Senate Garage, provid-

ing a picturesque backdrop for weddings. Its beautiful gardens also offer ideal locations for ceremonies, cocktail hours, and photo sessions.

The Senate Garage is situated near sev-

Hudson Valley Celebrations

Summer/Fall 2023

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Ulster Publishing (est. 1972) is a Hudson Valley media company with its office at 322 Wall Street in Kingston. For more info on upcoming magazines, including how to place an ad, call (845) 334-8200, fax (845) 334-8202 or e-mail info@hudsonvalleyone.com.

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eral popular nightlife and dining options, with a variety of restaurants, coffee bars, breweries, and boutique shops within walking distance. This availability of diverse experiences in close proximity to the venue not only enriches the wedding event itself but also provides guests with the opportunity to explore Kingston's vibrant urban culture.

Beyond its architectural and geographical features, the Senate Garage provides practical amenities to ensure a comfortable event. The venue offers a private suite with a restroom, lounge furniture, a sound system, and a kitchen. It has heat and AC for year-round comfort, and its full liquor license allows for seamless planning of beverage service. The venue can accommodate formal seating for up to 220 guests and is available for all-day rental. It also prides itself on being inclusive, welcoming couples of all orientations, and is flexible to accommodate different religious rituals and food requirements.

The Chateau

The Chateau offers a range of indoor and outdoor spaces to accommodate your event, from intimate gatherings in the Regency and Prive Lounge, to larger receptions in the Crystal Ballroom or the expansive 4500-square-foot Imperial Ballroom. The outdoor garden provides a charming setting for a romantic ceremony. The Chateau takes care of all the details, offering customized planning, expert coordination, setup, cleanup, in-house catering, and an in-house bar. They even welcome outside vendors to ensure every aspect of your vision is brought to life.

The Chateau's culinary team is versatile, with deep experience in creating custom menus. From delectable hors d'oeuvres and elegant plated meals to indulgent



Elegant table settings at The Venue Uptown.

dessert and wedding cake, they offer a diverse range of culinary delights.

The Chateau provides a private wedding suite, coat check, parking, valet parking, and wheelchair-accessible facilities. Beyond weddings, The Chateau is also a popular local venue for elopements, engagement parties, bridal showers, rehearsal dinners, and cocktail receptions. Their bar services include famously friendly, professional bartenders, a choice of cash bar, open bar, or limited bar options, a champagne toast, and the option to create a signature drink.

If you're looking for a simple, straightforward venue that checks all the boxes you'd expect of a wedding, with elegant ambiance to match, The Chateau is a tried-and-true option.

The Venue Uptown

Perhaps the most convenient wedding location in Kingston is The Venue Uptown. Tie the knot with up to 300 of your favorite people in over 8000 square feet of versatile space. This place is a blank slate for you to transform into your wedding

fantasy, with an adjacent Best Western Plus offering super-easy accommodations for guests. Chefs are available to fashion a personalized menu.

This option is modern and unpretentious, which might make it the most accessible wedding venue Uptown, if you're looking for something self-enclosed that's got all the basics covered.

Wiltwyck Weddings

Wiltwyck isn't just a golf club – it readily transforms into a remarkable wedding venue. Take your pick of on-site ceremony locations where you can exchange vows amidst a picturesque setting adorned with century-old trees. Vibrant nature and meticulously maintained landscaping provide a breathtaking backdrop. Inside, their ballroom awaits, boasting over 4000 square feet of elegant space for up to 300 guests. From this vantage point, guests can enjoy gorgeous views of the majestic Catskill Mountains and the expansive property.

Wiltwyck Weddings has a ton of experience, so it's no surprise the staff has a solid reputation for seamlessly planning and executing your special day. The venue offers all-inclusive packages that cover every detail, including a private bridal suite, coat check for guests, on-site ceremony locations, butler-served champagne and mineral water upon guest arrival, elegant table linens and napkins, personalized menu cards, an on-site rehearsal with an experienced event manager, a relaxing day at the pool for the bridal party, a round of golf for the bridal party, a grand tasting to finalize menu selections, and the assistance of signature bridal attendants.

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bridal attendant program designed to attend to every aspect of your wedding day. From serving the bride and groom during meals to coordinating the drop-off and pick-up of personal items, the bridal attendants are dedicated to ensuring a seamless experience. They are attentive during photo sessions, providing food and drinks, and offer their assistance to VIP guests, including family members. With meticulous attention to detail, Wiltwyck Weddings anticipates every need so that you can focus on cherishing your special day without a worry.

The Forsyth B&B and Barn

Situated in the historic Rondout neighborhood of Kingston, the Forsyth B&B and Barn presents a unique and intimate setting for weddings, parties, gatherings, and other special occasions. Housed in a meticulously restored 1830s residence, the structure boasts four opulent guest rooms, each with its own private bathroom, along with a separate suite, together sleeping up to 14 guests.

The Forsyth Barn, a beamed, lofted vintage structure basking under skylights, provides seating for up to 60. A cozy loft guest room adds room for two more. A stylish courtyard garden nestled between the B&B and Barn sets the stage for ceremonies or outdoor dining experiences. Gourmet catering services are provided by the in-house chef at Forsyth. To make your event flawless, an accomplished event planner, who is also the owner, is available for assistance.

7 Miles to Kingston

This former cattle farmer's home has been renovated to offer a charming space to exchange vows. The property boasts picturesque lawns, stunning creek-side views, and a pretty sweet pool.

Inside the event space, you'll find a touch of whimsy with disco balls, white paper

balloons, and a spacious dance floor that can accommodate up to 100 guests.

What sets the place apart is its flexibility. You have the freedom to bring in your own vendors, from catering to entertainment, ensuring your wedding reflects your personal style. The venue also provides convenient rentals such as seating, tables, and lighting equipment to make planning a breeze. And after the celebrations, you and your closest friends

a wedding on a grand scale.

The Rondout waterfront location is one of the venue's biggest selling points alongside their state-of-the-art Sperry Sailcloth tent. With the capacity to accommodate parties ranging from intimate gatherings of 20 to larger events of up to 140 guests, Ole Savannah is primed to host weddings as well as other major events. Their commitment to versatility ensures that whether you're envisioning a

casual buffet, a lively cocktail party, or an elegant sit-down dinner, Ole Savannah is dripping in spacious, relaxed ambience by the waterfront, with restaurant-quality food and drink.

Hudson River Cruise

Don't want to get hitched on land? Hudson River Cruises offers an affordable jaunt on our most famous local waterway for your special day. Live in a panorama of bucolic sights and sounds, seeing the Hudson Valley as river-faring travelers of yore once did. Enjoy a floating sunset reception and return to the glow of the Rondout area, ready to receive revelers at its many restaurants.

Kingston churches

Those of certain faiths have a unique opportunity to host their celebration in one of Kingston's grand historic churches. There are a number of chapel options to choose from, easy to find as a part of your faith. Particularly breathtaking are the Old Dutch Church (a professing house of worship that's happy

to host Christian covenants), St. Peter Roman Catholic Church, and St. James United Methodist Church. Each is a historic marvel.

City hall

No judgment if you just want to show up, tie the knot, and get on with your wedded bliss. The carefully restored Midtown building is historically significant and architecturally quite pleasing, so you won't be disappointed with your wedding day selfies. Love doesn't cost a thing.



Gettin' hitched at The Forsyth B&B and Barn will be memorable.

and family can enjoy a comfortable stay in the main house, which can accommodate up to eight guests. It's a modest but no less elegant option than the other venues in this list.

Ole Savannah

Ole Savannah, located in downtown Kingston, is making waves as the newest wedding and event venue in the Hudson Valley. While locals know this spot as a waterfront tourist destination and community hub, it's also an ideal venue to host



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Seven tips for first-time home buyers

A guide for new couples navigating the real-estate market



FRANCESCA ORTOLANO

Andrea and Michael knew what they needed in a home and were patient while looking for the right one, while keeping in their price range. Andrea trusted Michael's knowledge with all things related to the systems of the house, and Michael valued Andrea's input about location, configuration and style of home.

by Francesca Ortolano

EMBARKING ON THE journey of buying your first home as a new couple can be both exciting and overwhelming. It's a significant mile-

stone that marks the beginning of a new chapter in your lives. I know first-hand that navigating the complex real-estate market requires careful planning and consideration. Here, I'll provide seven essential tips to help couples make informed decisions when deciding to look

for their dream home.

1. Establish open and honest communication

Buying a home together requires open and honest communication between partners. Discuss your expectations, preferences, and long-term goals in private. It may reveal some differences on what you each expect. Do you want a rustic cabin up in the mountains away from everyone like in Mount Tremper or Olivebridge while your partner wants a nice colonial in a village like Saugerties, New Paltz or Woodstock?. Make sure to address concerns and resolve conflicts early on to avoid unnecessary stress during the homebuying process.

Though I had given that advice to a couple I worked with last year, they were

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apparently too busy to take the time to do so. It was very uncomfortable for me and became a bit embarrassing for them during their conflicts with questions like did they need a garage and does every

bedroom need a closet. In my experience, couples have a much more enjoyable experience together if they have had that important open and honest conversation prior to looking at houses.

2. Determine your budget and stick to it

Evaluate your combined financial situation and create a realistic budget that includes not just the down payment but

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also closing costs, property taxes, and other home ownership expenses. Call several lenders to find out what mortgage products they have available that would meet your needs. Get a pre-qualification letter or a pre-approval letter from a lender.

That budgeting process will help determine how much you can afford. It is part of the documentation needed when submitting an offer on a home. Many local banks and credit unions in the Hudson Valley provide excellent mortgage products. Choosing a local bank in the basic area where you want to make a home purchase is not necessary or required, but it can be to your advantage. Up here in these magical mountains there are many different types of homes with different types of operating systems. A lender who understands and is familiar with the uniqueness of homes in our region can be helpful.

Having a local lender on the pre-qualification letter is a benefit when you're submitting an offer. A couple I recently worked had a prequalification letter for \$250,000, but kept wanting to see those priced around \$300,000. It was their hope that they would be able to somehow have a much lower offer accepted. That's not realistic in the current market. They were spinning their wheels getting excited about homes they could not afford. In order for them to have success in their home-buying efforts, they had to get real! Once they did, finding a home became a breeze.

3. Define your needs and wants

Sit down together and make a list of your needs and wants in a home, the must-haves versus the would-likes. Consider factors such as the current market, location, size of home, number of bedrooms and bathrooms, proximity to amenities, acreage, and potential for future growth. Prioritize these features to help narrow down your search and ensure you're on the same page when it comes to the property you're both looking for.

These choices may change over the course of your search, as each time you tour a home you learn more about each other's wants and needs. What fun! Ulster County has so many different terrain, geography, and living environments to choose from. My strong suggestion is not to be too rigid with that list you both created. Be willing and open to seeing outside the box when it comes to a home's environment and neighborhood. Doing so will also help define your wants versus needs more clearly. A couple I worked with several years ago

never did that, and a year later they were still looking for a house to buy.

4. Research the market and be realistic

Take the time to research the real-estate market in the locations in which you're interested. Look at recent sales data, property values, and trends. This information, available online, will help you understand market conditions and determine a fair offer for a home you can imagine yourself living in. Knowledge is power!

The real-estate market Upstate was upended during the pandemic. The combination of lots of people wanting to relocate out of the city area mixed with little inventory created a very competitive market for buyers.

This rush has definitely slowed. Having your pre-qualification letter in place, knowing who your mortgage lender will be, having your tax returns from previous years on hand, paystubs, etc. will ensure you can be a competitive force when comes time to submit an offer. Be sure to be realistic about the current market prices.

I bought my first home in 1983, a 2000-square-foot two-story house with pool, cabana, balcony, woodstove, fireplace and full finished basement, for \$178,000 with an eight percent mortgage. Things were very different then. Now that same house goes for at least \$500,000. Prices reflect whatever the market will bear. You need a person whom you can trust to help advise you. A person experienced in the real-estate market can assist you by revealing all the factors that determine value of a home.

5. Engage a trusted real-estate agent

Choosing a reliable and experienced agent is especially important in the home-buying process of first-time homebuyers. Find an agent who is a good listener and responsive to your questions and concerns, one who has working knowledge of the area and local market. A buyer's agent can offer a number of local resources such as a list of attorneys, inspectors, etc. A good buyer's agent will guide you through the entire process from start to finish, provide expert advice and assistance, and be a savvy negotiator on your behalf.

Buyer's agents typically receive their commission at the closing from the seller, but are required to be loyal and devoted to you, the buyer. Your privacy, financial situation, pricing strategies, and other personal

information that may affect negotiations are all kept in confidence. Buyer agents are required to disclose all material defects in the house and disclose any information gained while speaking with the selling agent that can affect the outcome of your pending deal.

Your loyalty to one buyer's agent regardless of whether you are contracted with them is also important. It shows you value their time and respect their work. I will not work with a buyer who is using several agents in the same area. Your loyalty to me ignites my passion for what I do, and then I give it my all. My goal is to help you find the right home, no matter how long it takes, based on all you have learned about yourself and each other.

6. Conduct thorough inspections

Before making an offer, schedule a home inspection. Your buyer's agent can recommend several for you to call. A professional inspector will assess the property's condition, conduct various tests, identify potential material defects and necessary repairs, and then provides a full report with photos. This step is crucial in both the negotiation process and ultimately avoiding costly surprises.

An inspection typically is a contingency when submitting an offer on a home. If the inspection proves there are too many defects and repairs needed, you can withdraw your offer. If the inspection proves the house is sound with few defects and little need for repairs, you can move forward with much more knowledge.

7. Be patient and open-minded

Finding the perfect home may take time, so it's essential to be patient throughout the process. Stay open-minded. Be willing to compromise on some features if necessary. Remember that your first home might not be your forever home, but a starting point for building equity, credit, and memories.

One couple I am currently working with realized after looking at several homes at the top end of their price range and being outbid that they needed to look at the lower end of their price range, meaning that the homes they would be looking at would likely need some upgrading and renovations. Once they were open to this reality, they found a home they really liked, and are now on their way to making that purchase.

.....
Francesca Ortolano works as a real-estate salesperson for Coldwell Banker Timberland Properties in Mount Tremper.

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by Frances Marion Platt

LATE SUMMER THROUGH autumn are festival time in the Hudson Valley. Some celebrations go on for half a day, others for a weekend or even a full week. Some are geared for kids and families, others for teens or adult audiences. Whatever your area of interest — music, farm-to-table food, theater, thrill rides, history, humor, art, dance, classic cars, craft beer, ethnic cultures, geeky stuff — there's something happening to suit you. Here's a long but hardly exhaustive list of festive happenings to check out from late July into early September.

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 Various venues, Ellenville
www.borschtbelfest.org

Brand-new on our radar this summer — and closely tied to the project of opening a Catskills Borscht Belt Museum in downtown Ellenville — the Borscht Belt Fest will pay homage to the legacy of the region's hotels, resorts and night clubs that catered to the New York metro area's Jewish community in the middle of the last century. The Borscht Belt left a profound legacy and wide-ranging influence on contemporary American culture, notably as a training ground for comedians.

The festival will feature stand-up comedy, art, live music, film, educational programming, and of course food. Many of the events will be free: a street fair, exhibits, musical performances and movie screenings. Ticket prices for comedy shows and talks range from \$18 to \$35, with proceeds going to support the not-for-profit museum. Venues include Market Street Studios, Shadowland Stages and Morning Sunshine in Ellenville, plus a Sunday brunch and field trip to Mountain Dale. Paid performances include:



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Phoenicia Festival of the Arts happens on Main Street.

- The Plumber Always Flushes Twice: Tales & Jokes from a Catskills Plumber
- So, You Wanna Be Funny?
- Stop at the Red Apple: A Journey Back in Time
- The Borscht Belt Classic
- Stars of the Borscht Belt: The Entertainment Legacy of the Catskills
- Lucie Pohl's Immigrant Jam
- If You're Having a Good Time, Tell

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DION OGUST

Sunflower Festival in Poughquag, NY.

Your Face! Stand-up in the Catskills

- From Pushcarts to Poolside: An Immigrant History of Food
- Taste the Tradition: A Hands-on Halva-Making Workshop
- New Faces in Standup
- Comedy Cellar Showcase
- Weeding out the Stoned: The Game Show of Sobriety Tests

**Saturday, July 29,
7-11 p.m.**

Wizard Fest

**Mahoney's Irish Pub &
Steakhouse, Poughkeepsie**

www.eventbrite.com

Wizard Fest is an interactive fantasy-

themed party featuring a deejay, dancing, themed drinks, a cosplay costume contest, wizard trivia and wizard games. Although nobody's specifying which particular highly trademarked wizard, wizarding world, books or movie series might be the inspiration for the celebration here, the drinks menu includes references to "buttery brews." Attendees not competing for costume prizes are encouraged to wear "house colors or dress robes" at the least, and to bring brooms or wands. (Strictly no admittance of owls, cats or toads.)

General admission costs \$18; the VIP package at \$66 includes priority entry and a swag bag including a Wizard Fest scarf, tee-shirt, custom wand, cup and totebag.

Saturday, July 29, 4:15 p.m.
Outlaw Music Festival
**Bethel Woods Center for the Arts,
Pavilion**

www.bethelwoodscenter.org

Okay, technically this all-star concert is a festival in name only, but it's billed as "North America's largest touring music festival." The headliner is its founder, the beloved Willie Nelson, joined by Nathaniel Rateliff and the Night Sweats, Gov't Mule, Kathleen Edwards & Particle Kid. The gates open at 3 p.m. and the music starts at 4:15. Ticket prices range from \$54 (lawn) to \$388.

August

Tuesday-Sunday, August 1-6
Ulster County Fair
**Ulster County Fairgrounds, 249
Libertyville Road, New Paltz**
<https://ulstercountyfair.com>

With a pedigree dating back to 1869, the Ulster County Fair combines the rustic charm of an old-fashioned harvest fair, featuring live farm animals and pie competitions, with more contemporary attractions, including a lively midway and a lineup of popular country music stars. This year's headliner acts include Thunder Ridge, Lee Greenwood, Alex Shillo's Tribute to Bruce Springsteen,

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the Kentucky Headhunters, Thompson Square and J. D. Leonard (As Garth).

Admission to all the entertainment except games and refreshments) at the Ulster County Fair is included in a single wristband price of \$18 advance purchase, \$20 at the gate. A family of up to eight people can get in for \$50 on Carload Night: Tuesday, August 1 from 4 p.m. on. Seniors get in free from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. on Wednesday and Thursday. The fair is open from 10 a.m. to 10 p.m. on Wednesday and Thursday, 10 a.m. to 11 p.m. Friday and Saturday, and 10 a.m. to 8 p.m. on Sunday. Rides open at 11 a.m. Parking is free.

Friday-Sunday, August 4-6
Phoenicia Festival of the Arts
Main Street, Phoenicia
www.vargagallery.com

Here's another big event launching this summer for the first time, sponsored by the Varga Gallery. The three-day Phoenicia Festival of the Arts event spans the entirety of Main Street from the Arts & Antiques Center at the former pharmacy to the beloved Phoenicia Playhouse in the center of town, all the way down to the Phoenicia Park field. It includes a Main Street market for artists and artisans and plenty of family-friendly activities and happenings throughout town.

The visual art piece of the festival will include an exhibition at the Varga Gallery, a pop-up show at the Arts & Antiques Center, plus outdoor installations all over downtown. Performances at the Phoenicia Playhouse will include a free opening-night celebration on Friday, August 4 at 7 p.m. with Anna Hafner's *The Oneironaut*, a multimedia telling of a dream-traveler who comes to Earthside to save us from ourselves. On Saturday at 5 p.m., Hudson Valley Improv will perform Samantha Jones' *Butterfly Suicide*. At 2 p.m. on Sunday, a literary panel including Suzan Saxman, Sparrow X, Carter, Shiv Mirabito, Amy King, Abigail Thomas, James Conrad and others will hold forth. It will be followed by a live podcast called *That Wasn't Supposed to Happen* by Moth Radio Hour story slam winner Heather Dell'Amore.

The Main Street Market will host live outdoor music, poetry readings, open mics and artist demonstrations, and offer artisan-made gifts, artwork, curated vintage collections, ceramics, sculpture, and more. Street performers and buskers



Shopping the Woodstock-New Paltz Arts & Crafts Fair.

will be dancing, playing and performing live street cabaret, including a "Wandering Gypsy Tarot Faerie Witch" and a "shapeshifting, wandering art creature from realms unknown." There will be psychics, mediums, tarot readers and diviners; community tai chi, yoga, gong baths, hula hooping and meditation; a weaving workshop and a drum circle. Activities for kids will include sasquatch walks and fairy wandmaking.

Saturday, August 5, 12-6 p.m.
Hudson Valley Craft Beverage Festival
Twin Star Orchards, 155 North Ohioville Road, New Paltz
www.twinstarorchards.com

More than 20 producers of cider, wine, beer, spirits and mead will gather at Twin Star Orchards on the outskirts of New Paltz. There will be live music all day, with the Mixtapes starting up at noon and Lucas Perez at 3:30 p.m. Wood-fired pizza, burgers and barbecue will be available for sale.

The Hudson Valley Craft Beverage Festival will offer two two-hour tasting sessions, at 1 and 3:30 p.m. Tickets for each of the sessions cost \$20 if purchased online and \$25 at the door. VIP tickets at \$55 allow early entry to the tasting tents between noon and 1 p.m. All tickets include a souvenir tasting glass.

Saturday, August 5
Positive Jam Festival
Arrowood Farms, 236 Lower Whitfield Road, Accord
<https://arrowoodfarms.com/music>

The Hold Steady will headline the inaugural Positive Jam music festival on the outdoor stage at Rondout Valley craft brewery Arrowood Farms. Also in the lineup are Guided by Voices, The Tallest Man on Earth, Laura Stevenson, I Get Wild, and Oceanator. Local food vendors and craft beer will be available. Curtain time and ticket prices are yet to be announced as of press time.

Sunday, August 6, noon-8 p.m.
Bon-Odori Dance Festival for Peace
Kingston Point Beach, Kingston
www.bonodori.org

Japanese noodle queen/peace activist Youko Yamamoto's Bon-odori Dance Festival for Peace, marking the anniversary of the atomic bomb strikes on Hiroshima and Nagasaki in 1945, returns for its thirteenth iteration. Live music and dance, Buddhist prayer ceremonies, presentations on Japanese culture, and speeches about preventing war and nuclear proliferation characterize this annual event. Admission is free.

"The theme of this year is 'No Nuke,



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No War' to protest nuclear weapons, energy and the radioactive environment," Yamamoto says. "Because of the rising tensions and fear of nuclear weapons in the Russia-Ukraine war, it is the time to make our voice loud to be heard."

Wednesday-Sunday, August 9-13
Hudson Valley Jazz Festival
Beacon, Greenwood Lake,
Kingston, Marlboro Montgomery,
Port Jervis, Stone Ridge, Sugar
Loaf, Tarrytown, Warwick, West
Park, Woodstock
www.hudsonvalleyjazzfest.org

"We've been honored to present high-profile jazz artists in the past. However, our mission is primarily featuring groups led by Hudson Valley, NY resident artists," write the organizers of the Hudson Valley Jazz Festival, now in its fourteenth season. "We're all about helping raise the profile of musicians with years of experience deserving wider recognition."

Even if you're not a passionate jazz aficionado, you'll likely recognize at least a few of the performers in this year's extensive lineup, from local stars such as Bob Shaut, Peter Tomlinson, Teri Roiger and Jon Menegon to more nationally known names



DAVID GORDON

Hudson Valley Garlic Festival in Saugerties.

including Pete Levin, Jimmy Vivino and Harvey Sorgen. We're especially delighted to note that the eclectic and indefatigable David Amram, now age 92, will be appearing at Beacon's Howland Cultural Center on Saturday evening, August 12.

Participating venues in this truly valley-

wide festival include the Cove and the Trail's End Taphouse in Greenwood Lake, the Front Street Tavern and Frank Guido's Little Italy in Kingston, the Hudson House Distillery in West Park, On the Lawn in Sugar Loaf Crossing, the UpFront Gallery in Port Jervis (with a Bill Evans tribute

concert), Pierson Park in Tarrytown, Astoria Hudson in Montgomery, Railroad Green in Warwick, the Howland Cultural Center in Beacon, Lydia's in Stone Ridge, Barnstock in Woodstock, the Albert Wisner Library in Warwick and the Falcon in Marlboro. For all the details on artists, dates, times, locations and ticket prices, visit the website at www.hudsonvalleyjazzfest.org.

Saturday, August 12, 11 a.m.-7 p.m.
Hudson Valley Caribbean Carnival
Cantine Veterans' Memorial Field,
Saugerties
www.seasonedgives.org/events

The not-for-profit organization Sea-

soned Gives is hosting its fourth annual Hudson Valley Caribbean Carnival, featuring a full day of authentic Caribbean food, music and cultural events, children's activities and more. The parade begins at 2 p.m. Admission is free for all.

For more information on scheduled performers, visit the website at www.seasonedgives.org/events.

Saturday, August 12, 9 a.m.-4 p.m.
Blueberry Festival
Canal Street/Liberty
Square, Ellenville

If you're a regular hiker in the Shawangunks, you probably have your favorite spots for picking wild blueberries and

huckleberries in midsummer. And if you know your local history, you'll be aware that there used to be an entire settlement of people atop the ridge, the Trapps hamlet, whose annual income depended mainly on huckleberry-picking. It's a wonder those shining white conglomerate cliffs weren't permanently stained purple.

Your teeth, tongue and fingers might be, though, once you've spent a day at Ellenville's long-running annual Blueberry Festival. It goes on rain or shine, with live music all day – this year from the Hudson Valley Youth Orchestra, the Jazz Pioneers and the Hudson Valley Bluegrass Express. More than 100 vendors, many of them hawking blueberry pies, muffins, jams and

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other seasonal goodies, will line the downtown streets. There are contests (possibly involving having to eat a number of pies with your hands tied behind your back) and a 50/50 raffle. Admission is free.

**Saturday, August 12,
11 a.m.-3 p.m.**
**Cars for Cathy
Memorial Car Show**
**Red Rooster Sports
Pub, 82 South Cross
Road, Staatsburg**
[https://
carcruisefinder.com](https://carcruisefinder.com)

Motorheads gather for a worthy cause at the Cars for Cathy Memorial Car Show in Staatsburg, this year having its fifth annual outing. All makes and models of cars are welcome, with a \$15-per-car entry fee. All proceeds will be donated to the St. Jude Children's Hospital. Trophies for first, second and third place will be awarded, based on "the people's choice." Food and beverages will be available. The rain date is Sunday, August 13.

Sunday, August 13, 10 a.m.-3 p.m.
**Saugerties Antique Auto Club Car,
Truck & Motorcycle Show**
**Cantine Veterans' Memorial
Field, Saugerties**

Got some vintage wheels you want to

show off? Or do you just have fun admiring other people's rides? The 66th annual Saugerties Antique Auto Club Car, Truck & Motorcycle Show is a big deal, organized by serious collectors. All makes and models are welcome to compete for more than 40 trophies, judged separately in two age categories: prior to 1998 and from 1999 to the present. Registration is free for vehicles built pre-1942, \$15 thereafter. Among the awards are one for best Model T/Model A, another for best unrestored

pre-war, and even longest distance driven.

Admission is free for spectators. Breakfast and lunch will be served. There will be live music, and DJ Brian will be playing oldies all day. To register a car in advance, call Irene DeGraff at 845-679-6810 or Rich Flaherty at 845-337-8426. You can also register on-site from 10 a.m. to noon.

Sunday, August 13, 9 a.m.-3 p.m.
**ATCA Mid-Hudson Chapter
Annual Antique Truck Show**
**Ulster County Fairgrounds, 249
Libertyville Road, New Paltz**
[https://www.facebook.com/
events/717347203390908](https://www.facebook.com/events/717347203390908)

All trucks and tractors 25 years and older are welcome to participate in this year's antique truck show organized by the Mid-Hudson Chapter of the Antique Truck Club of America. Spectators aged 13 and up are asked for a suggested donation of \$2 to attend. Refreshments will be available.

Registration to show a truck costs \$10. To sign up or obtain more information, contact Jim Bracco at 845-206-5091 or jmbmsb@aol.com, or Mike Fowler at 845-883-7191 or mfowler53@hotmail.com.



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Saturday-Sunday, August 19 & 20
Catbird Music Festival
Bethel Woods Center for the Arts
www.catbirdmusicfestival.com

For the first time in decades, a new music fest will debut on the historic field of Woodstock 1969. It's the two-day Catbird Music Festival, emphasizing folk, indie and Americana artists, as well as jam bands. On Saturday, August 19, you can hear the Lumineers, the War on Drugs, Band of Horses, Trampled by Turtles, Margo Price, James Bay, Shovels & Rope, Adia Victoria, 49 Winchester, Briscoe and John R. Miller. Sunday's lineup includes Tyler Childers, the Trey Anastasio Band, Dispatch, Charley Crockett, Morgan Wade, Amos Lee, Celisse, Allison Russell, Soul Rebels, Eggy and Madeline Edwards.

Tickets are being sold for single-day entry and for the full weekend, with prices ranging from \$140 for general admission for one day up to \$1500 for a two-day platinum pass that comes with all sorts of bells and whistles including up-front seating, special lounges and concierge services. Premium parking, camping and glamping passes are available for additional fees.

Tuesday, August 22-
Sunday, August 27
Dutchess County Fair
Dutchess County Fairgrounds,
6550 Springbrook
Avenue, Rhinebeck

If the Ulster County Fair is the homey small-town version of a classic American country fair, the 177-year-old Dutchess County Fair is our region's grandpappy of the genre, the second-largest county fair in New York State. Everything about it, from the midway to the array of agricultural exhibits spread over the 160-acre site, is huge. In addition to typical fair fare like prizewinning 4-H livestock, giant pumpkins, pies and pickles, horse-jumping and racing pigs, you can also check out oddball offerings like dock-diving dogs and sheep and goat costume competitions. Special areas highlight agriculture, horticulture, turn-of-the-century treasures, a working blacksmith shop, and a gas-powered engine show.

In most cases, admission to live grandstand performances is included in the daily entry price. The exception this year is headliner Brantley Gilbert, performing at 7:30 p.m. on Wednesday, August 23; his show costs \$65 extra. Other grandstand



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DION OGUST

Woodstock Film Festival.

acts include Cooper Alan and Chase McDaniel on Tuesday, the Steve Augeri Band on Thursday, Chris Cagle on Friday, and Refugee, a Tom Petty Tribute Band, on Saturday – all at 7:30 p.m. Sunday's grandstand event, the Dutchess Fair Highland Games, runs from 11 a.m. to 6 p.m.

Fair hours are from 10 a.m. to 10 p.m. Tuesday through Saturday, and 10 a.m. to 8 p.m. on Sunday. Rides start running at 11 a.m.

To avoid long lines, purchase your tickets online in advance. Children aged 11 and under are admitted free, but midway ride tickets or wristbands must be purchased separately. Adult admission costs \$15 online, \$18 at the gate. On Wednesdays, seniors (65+) and military personnel can get in for \$12. Ride-all-day wristbands cost \$33 online, \$35 on-site. Individual ride tickets cost \$2 each, 20 for \$25, 52 for \$60. Parking is free.

**Saturdays/Sundays/Labor Day,
August 26-October 8, 10 a.m.-7 p.m.
New York Renaissance Faire
Sterling Forest, 600 Route 17A,
Tuxedo**

<https://renfaire.com/ny>

Our region's premier Ren Faire will be back for seven weekends, offering endless choices of fun things to see, hear and do in a parklike setting, surrounded by earnestly in-character medieval knights and ladies, rogues and wenches, mummers, jugglers, singers, pipers, merchants, artisans, publicans, aristocrats, falconers and fairies. Do wear a period costume, if you've got anything resembling one, to heighten the sense of immersion in this fantasy world.

If you've been here before, you probably already know what regular performers you most want to track down. We're especially pleased to report that bawdy perennial favorites the Washing Well Wenches will be back this year. There will be a few new acts as well, including a storyteller called the King of Crochet. You can still visit the Viking village, view scenes from Shakespeare, and follow Robin Hood and his Merry Band of Outlaws from one confrontation with villains to another all day long.

Special themed weekends for 2023 include marketplace weekend, September 2 through 4; time traveler weekend (when the steampunk crowd shows up) September 9 and 10; and pirate weekend, September 16 and 17. The latter two have costume contests.

Ticket prices have gone up this year, alas, so keep an eye and ear out for discount offers. Adult entry costs \$42, \$18 for children aged five to twelve, \$37 for seniors and military personnel. A season pass at \$225 is a good deal if you live close enough to pop in anytime the weather's nice.

**Friday-Sunday,
August 25-September 3
Sunflower Festival
Barton Orchards,
63 Apple Tree Lane, Poughquag
[www.bartonorchards.com/
events-calendar](http://www.bartonorchards.com/events-calendar)**

A two-weekend party organized around cutting your own sunflowers from about 100,000 of them growing in a five-acre field, with a selection of eleven different varieties? Sounds like a real mood-lifter! The fifth annual Barton Orchards Sunflower Festival also offers live music, a tap room featuring beer and cider from 20 local craft breweries, wine and spirits,

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**Contact: Andrea Pastorella, Dancer/Choreographer and
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lobster rolls, craft vendors and hayrides. Just for kids, there's a fun park with a new mega slide, a petting zoo, a wooden ship playground, and a slip 'n' slide.

The Sunflower Festival is open from 4 p.m. to 9 p.m. on Fridays, August 25 and September 1; 11 a.m. to 9 p.m. on Saturdays, August 26 and September 2; and 11 a.m. to 6 p.m. on Sundays, August 27 and September 3 and on Labor Day, Monday, September 4.

As of press time in mid-July, discounted early-bird pricing was still available on the website at <https://bartonorchards.ticketspice.com/5th-annual-sunflower-festival>. Admission for ages 13 and up currently costs \$20, \$15 for children aged 4 to 12, plus taxes and fees. These tickets entitle the purchaser to cut two sunflowers. Additional blooms cost three dollars each. Guests are encouraged to bring their own small gardening shears, as the venue has a limited supply. Parking at Barton Orchards is free.

September

**Saturday-Monday,
September 2-4, 10 a.m.
Woodstock-New Paltz Art &
Crafts Fair
Ulster County Fairgrounds, 249
Libertyville Road, New Paltz
www.quailhollow.com**

This twice-annual juried crafts fair, running since 1982, needs no introduction. About 200 exhibitors offer top-shelf handcrafted products in the categories of ceramics, distilleries/wineries, fiber, fine art, glass, jewelry, leather, metal, mixed media, photography, publishing, wood and furniture. A separate tent is dedicated to handcrafted specialty foods and healthcare products. You get to watch live craft demonstrations and listen to great local musicians. Kids are entertained for free in an arts and crafts tent under adult supervision while you shop. The selection of fair food is top-quality.

The fair opens at 10 a.m. each day and closes at 5:30 p.m. on Saturday and Sunday and at 4 p.m. on Labor Day. Admission costs \$12 for adults, \$10 for seniors. Parking is free, and you can't beat the view of the Gunks.

**Sunday, September 3,
11 a.m.-9 p.m.
Hooley on the Hudson
T. R. Gallo Memorial Park,
30 Rondout Landing, Kingston**

<https://ulsteraoh.com/hooley-on-the-hudson.html>

Come on down to the Rondout waterfront to enjoy the 22nd annual Hooley on the Hudson Irish festival, hosted by the City of Kingston and the Ancient Order of Hibernians Division 1, Ulster County. It's a full day of free entertainment on three stages, featuring live music and step dancing and traditional music for all ages, plus lots of food and craft vendors and cultural exhibits. The celebration commences with a parade of fignitaries at 11:30 a.m.

On the Feeney stage, the performers will include the Ulster County AOH Pipes & Drums, Kilashandra, Sheridan Ruitin, the Farrell School of Irish Dance, the Little

Creek Band and Barleyjuice. The Bill Yosh stage will present the opening ceremonies and national anthems with Tommy Flynn, followed by the T. McCann Band, the Ulster County AOH Pipes & Drums, Celtic Heels Irish Dance, Triskele, Andy Cooney and His Band and McGroovin'. The new Trad stage will feature Liz Hanley, Jefferson Hammer, Leah Rankin, Matt Stapleton, Joseph Sobel, Max Carmichael and Matthew Christian.

As parking down on the Rondout is limited, consider leaving your car in one of the designated free shuttle stops for the Hooley: Kingston Plaza, the Cornell Street public lot, and, for handicapped individuals Kingston Point.



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The wedding guests

If treated like a commodity, love dies

by Rokosz Most

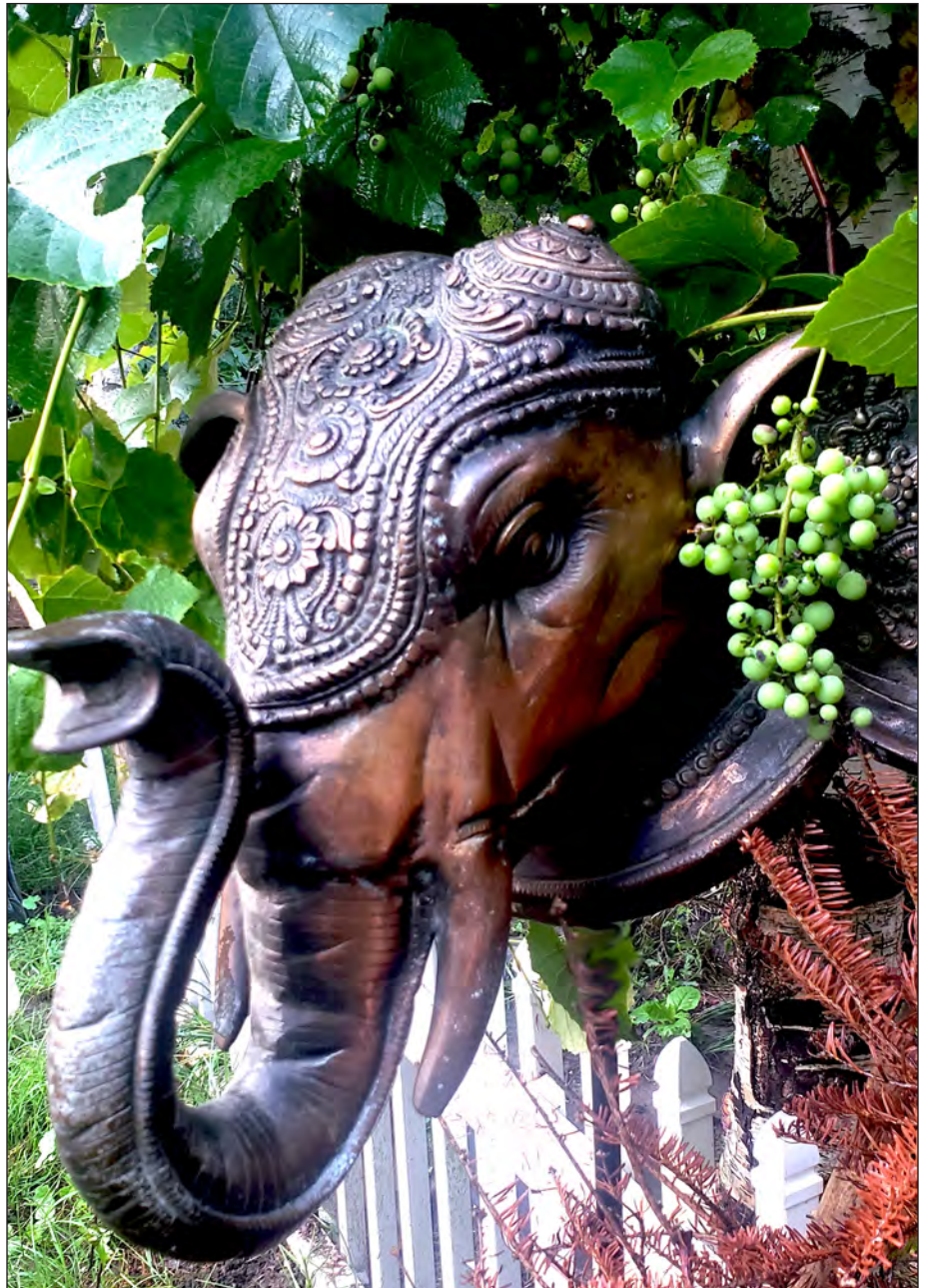
RAISE THE PULSE, get bright-eyed, blush and go dancing. Get into arguments and deadly serious disagreements, shout at each other and burst into tears. Storm off in a tizzy, go to friends and allies for consolation and camaraderie. Go to sleep miserable, wake up worse. Mope around with hurt pride, wander through a depressed shadow world of unremarkable regeneration and boredom. Assess your own failings in the matter, assign fault and judgment. Make vows. Raise the pulse, get bright-eyed. Start trouble, be dangerous, blush and go dancing. Raise hell. Romance.

Eighteenth-century philosopher and writer Denis Diderot tells the fable of a knife arguing with a sheath, each upset about broken promises of loyalty which both had failed to keep. They are scolded by an unnamed third party for committing the folly of promising not to change. If a knife was meant for just one sheath, it is observed, and if a sheath was meant for just one knife, why should the shape of each accommodate so many others?

The fable may not be moral, but it is merry.

Marriage

So sayeth a mariner officiating a union: "This vessel is not meant to capsize, not meant to scuttle, but to be buoyant and seaworthy from stem to stern in hail storms and perfect weather alike. But even a sturdy mast may snap. For your own sake, trim the sails in a hurricane. There are rocks stored down below in the hold. They are so much ballast to be shifted when the vessel behaves erratically, should it become too heavily weighed down, when spiritless in the doldrums or wallowing in the troughs, make lively and haul some rocks up and toss them overboard into the deep blue sea. At these times one must be careful not to leap over



According to Hindu beliefs, worshipping Lord Ganesha before marriage brings prosperity to a married couple's life.

with them. Amen."

This is all to the point that a thing so mysterious as love should be approached only sideways, with eyes averted if one wishes not to startle it and see it bolt.

To believe in such a thing requires that

it shouldn't be forced to undergo an appraisal. If treated like a commodity, love dies.

Place that which is precious in this life high up and at such a distance where it can't help but be improved upon by a

hopeful gaze. Rather than have love brought low and described in low words.

In every wise tradition love is presented in dramatically colored fabrics, bathed in enticing oils and perfumes and presented in a warm, dusky light. Received thus, falling-wise, love can draw tight like a snare set for a rabbit. And it may happen that the one caught may not want to get free.

Celebration

For those that have not found their match, will not find their match or cannot celebrate their match openly, every celebration of happy union must turn like a corkscrew in the heart. Afflicted with the divine insult of loneliness, the injured party can only watch from within the wedding party or from without while the worst takes its course.

Don't I deserve to be happy? Why should I be alone? Why should I celebrate someone else's good luck when I suffer?

These words are so familiar that there might as well only be one sufferer in the world with a thousand voices.

This then is a cautionary tale against the admiration of individuality. It alienates each from the other, Joys and sorrows which previously were shared are now rendered separately.

There is not someone for everyone, sorry to say.

Share in the collective experience of hope and delusion. Be oblivious of the discarded trash scattered thick around experience. A celebration should be a grand gesture. Forget the corkscrew in the heart (one's own and others') for the duration, and congregate.

The wedding celebration resembles the act of slowing down to examine a car crash, provided the people inside the wrecked automobile are un-mangled and in the prime of their lives. They have defeated the odds and are smiling.

Community

The celebration is not for the vain creatures in the center of it all, Youth has no idea what's coming. Without the community as audience, the performance of a marriage resembles kissing oneself in a mirror.

The community knows exactly what they're watching. The middle-aged, bogged down with bills and children, having sipped from differing measures of success and setback, know how the awful



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revisions after each experience can sap the colors of a sunset.

The tree grows from a sapling. It flowers for the first time, bears fruit for a number of seasons, and then dies.

Cut it down, chop it up, and throw it into the fire. Lost out under the stars, this is how humanity keeps warm.

Just as in a play, so as not to ruin the show the audience suspends disbelief.

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The youngest, drawn in by the pageant to consider their own possibilities and to choose from the archetypes they resemble, are impressed by the seriousness of the situation. The oldest count the hordes, potentially, that have issued from their own loins and recall the ghosts of their own lives. Ghost weddings. Ghost lovers. Ghost dreams. Between the young and old manifests the unbroken chain of the living back to the bright soul who divided first. Or who was cut in half and multiplied and set off this chain reaction of endlessly contesting lives.

So enters the song of superstition. Where are the priests? They're on their way.

Superstition

Remember, everything could go wrong. There is bad luck to contend with.

Vigilant, misshapen, a vulture pursues happiness, following from above. There are ways to get around this.

Wear a veil. Get the blessing of the man with the elephant head. Avoid weddings on Wednesdays. Pay attention to the calendar. Avoid the moon in Scorpio.

There are seven vortices of energy starting at the tailbone and ending at the crown of the skull.

Build a hot fire to ward off evil. Apply slaked lime and turmeric. Walk around the fire seven times.

Engage in seven days of expiation followed by seven days of celebration. Seven prayers offered on the seventh day by the seventh son. Seven questions answered.

Congregate before the day is done. Arrive on a horse. Shower the bride with flower petals. Arrive on an elephant. Shower the bride with coins. Offer rice to the fire. And begin.

Four posts. Four witnesses. Take off your shoes when approaching the divine. The couple gets married under a Mandap. The couple gets married under a Chupa. The couple gets married underneath an arbor. And there you have it again.

The couple's souls have been joined like two pieces of fabric. Muslin gauze intertwined with linen. The time was auspicious to exchange the rings. To drink the wine. To smash plates. To sing songs. And to dance!

But what about the religious officials? They are beating on the door demanding to be let in. The noisy pills in the punch haven't been consulted. They who have made the union and judgment of souls their business haven't given their bless-

ing. Here they come with contracts and consecrated prayers, with liturgies and acclamations and the potential, if left to their own devices, to stir up repudiation and damnation. They who prohibit and issue stern warnings like angry freelancing fathers.

Keep the doors closed against them. Let them pray where no-one can hear them and kneel where no one can see. The birds sing our psalms and the earth is ours while we're on it and maybe even after. Let the vows be reinvented by the lovers. Let the arms of the women go bare, and their hair go uncovered if they so wish it. The water laughs from riverbeds to see it. The sun approves.

Resolution

Open the doors. They can be forgiven. They must be thirsty after the lecture circuit of the desert. Let them turn water into wine if they can, If more likely they can't, let them share what there is to be shared and be satisfied in the service of commemorating love.

Let them come in and be welcomed as wedding guests. No more, no less.

But if it all gets to be too much, if the audience won't stay in their seats, if disbelief goes unsuspended, if the priests insist on sermons mandated by the First Council of Nicaea, if it's all corkscrews and no hearts, all salt crystals and no sapphires, set the stage, cue the band, uncork the wine, and elope.

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