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# Hudson Valley Living

*Spring Home Improvement 2021*



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# Transformation

*Our family now enjoys a new sauna*



Sitting area outside sauna.

by Genia Sveikauskas

**T**HIS EDITION OF *Hudson Valley Living* magazine is an exploration of the people who live in unique and creative homes in our region.

My dreams always consisted of flying to far-off countries, driving through little villages with multi-colored homes on cobbled streets, tasting the food of different cultures, and seeing views that differed from those of the Catskill Mountains. I wanted just a few weeks each year for a change of scenery to make my dreams come true. And so that's what my family planned for and did.

The experience was very rewarding. Weeks before our trip last year, the planes stopped. Reservations were cancelled. Our hopes of getting away to see something new faded away. Luckily we got refunds. We sat in our home scared for our business, worried about our health, afraid to venture past our own doorway let go further afield. Being in the grocery store made us sweat. Social interaction became

a thing of the past.

After a few weeks we realized that this was going to be more than a brief period of isolation. Promises of life going back to "normal" were unconvincing.

We felt our stress and we decided we needed to refocus on our home for a little while. How could we turn our dreams

toward fixing up our home and transform it into a little haven for ourselves?

Our family had spent time on exploring in the Scandinavian and Baltic cultures. We loved the laid-back feeling when we visited these places. Things seemed to move at a different pace than what we were used to. Where did this feeling



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come from? Could we transfer that feeling to here?

We found a way.

Saunas play a large role in many of the places we visited. Norway has the most saunas at with an astounding 3.3 million saunas in a population of five million people, according to upknorth.com, a Scandinavian blog site. "Apart from offering general relaxation and reason for social gathering, sitting in a sauna also has several health benefits," argued the blog. "The effects of just 15 minutes in the sauna has results akin to light exercise. Your heart gets a mild workout while your body works hard to pump out stored toxins. On top of this, saunas have been proven to help treat chronic fatigue, mild depression, arthritis, musculoskeletal pain and a variety of skin conditions, giving it the accurately coined term 'poor man's pharmacy.'"

The blog's advocacy spoke to us. We needed to figure out how to take positive steps to deal with the stressors which seemed to be coming at us in waves. We needed to focus our dreams and hopes on our home. We needed a short time each day or a couple of times a week to sit and breathe.



The newly built sauna.

SO WE DECIDED TO BUILD A SAUNA.

We had no building experience. The members of my family worked through

our usual differences. We made mistakes and learned from them. We're very happy with the result.

When all was said and the project was complete, we took a step back and looked at our house. It reminded me less of Scandinavia and more of the dozens of other Hudson Valley homes I had been inside, the homes of artists, musicians, and people who worked in offices but had poured all their creativity into their homes.

We have a plethora of fabulously differ-

ent homes in the Hudson Valley. Thanks in large part due to our new sauna, our home had become in my mind one of the many unique, quirky and creative homes I grew up admiring.

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EDITOR & PUBLISHER: Geddy Sveikauskas  
 ADVERTISING DIRECTOR: Genia Wickwire  
 ADVERTISING: Lynn Coraza, Pam Coursele,  
 Elizabeth Jackson, Angela Lattrell,  
 Tobi Watson, Jenny Bella  
 PRODUCTION MANAGER: Joe Morgan  
 PRODUCTION: Diane Congello-Brandes,  
 Josh Gilligan  
 CIRCULATION: Dominic Labate  
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# Chefs and bakers

*“Most of my life is  
in the kitchen”*

by Cloey Callahan

## Ric Orlando

When Ric Orlando retired from being a restaurant chef in 2018, his home slowly evolved into a workspace with a renovated garage, half a test kitchen for his product line of Ric-ter Scale sauces



Ric Orlando's deck.

and spices and half a packing and shipping center.

His home in West Hurley is on three acres. He and his wife have called it home

for 20 years. They originally purchased it for its location.

“Our kitchen was horrible when we bought this house,” said Orlando. “It was

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a little tiny electric-stove, Sixties kitchen. Over time, we opened it up and turned it into a workspace. My wife loves to design spaces, and she asked what I need. It's not fancy – it's just great. We have a beautiful stove and enough work surfaces."

Three butcher-block units can be moved around to do work in different areas of the kitchen – maximizing the mobility of the space. The renovations from across the years were majority DIY, repurposing miscellaneous furniture.

Today, Orlando does a significant portion of his work in his home. He develops his recipes in his test kitchen in the two-car garage, formerly a mini-apartment for his father-in-law and then a hangout space. He fulfills orders in the next room.

Fans of Orlando's may have seen his home kitchen for one of the many recipe videos he has made over the past year for his Youtube channel and for local food-delivery service Field Goods.

"People talk to me about 'I like the way you have the spices displayed in your kitchen,'" said Orlando. "Everyone knows what my kitchen looks like.... My funny little kitchen is now where people see me cooking."

The two deck area looking towards a

stream outside have also seen change over the years. Orlando has a smoker, grill and a four-burner stove there, and is now thinking about building a stone oven outside.

"As soon as it gets warm, we eat all of our meals outside," said Orlando. "Basically April to October. Most of the time we're out in the yard because everybody wants to be there."

The continuum from the kitchen through his sliding glass doors to the lower deck to the stream is his favorite spot in his home. When he's not cooking, he's in his home's music studio.

### Arlene Deahl

Arlene Deahl has been a home baker since the fruition of Banana Moon Baking Company eight years ago. She lives and bakes out of her Catskill home, where she has resided for 15 years.

At first, her small kitchen allowed her to bake cookies. Today, it's where she makes cakes.

"My kitchen is surprisingly small," said Deahl. "Honestly, people would probably be shocked with the amount of product I get through my small kitchen and one

stove."

Although her actual kitchen might be on the small side, her large, walk-in pantry has been incredibly helpful to her operations. "I have a good semi-cold-storage room for all my containers of flour and 50-pound bags of this or that," said Deahl.

When she isn't using her kitchen to bake, it transforms into "remote school central" in which her two children learn from home due to the pandemic.

She does plan to relocate eventually. The kitchen will be an "important priority for her when she'll be looking for another space. "Most of my life is in the kitchen," said Deahl.

### Bryan Roefs

When Bryan Roefs isn't working at Catskill Mountain Pizza, he is in his own part Fifties-Miami-vibe diner, part commercial-style kitchen in his Willow home. Roefs decided to move out of an apartment on his mother's Woodstock home in 2010 to a property with a number of cabins on it/

Originally, he used the property to let friends crash and rented it out. After getting to a point to afford an addition on the already existing structures, he created the beginning of the kitchen that exists now.

The kitchen has turned into the center of his home – perfect for his favorite kind of dinner parties. It enables guests

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32m

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Navy veteran with mesothelioma

Left to Right: Joseph Belluck, Jordan Fox, Kristina Georgiou



Ric Orlando's kitchen.



An Arlene Deahl creation.

to sit at the island counter and graze while Roefs cooks in front of the commercial-size stove.

"I do a lot of baking and testing things out there," said Roefs, whose home also has a recently installed wood-fired pizza oven. "I've always wanted a commercial stove in my kitchen because I'm so used to that kind of cooking and those temperatures. Having normal-home burning temperatures didn't really make sense for me."

He also wanted a commercial sink at first. Instead, he



Bryan Roefs' kitchen.



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Bryan Roefs' dining area.

went for a 24-by-18-by-12-inch single-basin sink instead.

The addition of the complementing

diner booth was created "to make a nice, comfy, cozy spot in the kitchen." It has a black table with speckled red-and-white

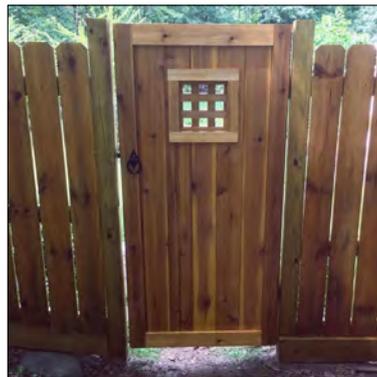
vegetables and canned goods. In a new storage setup, he'll also want to find a spot for his large collection of cookbooks.

booth seats. The rest of the counters are black, with white and teal cabinets. For a pop of color, the walls are pink.

While the kitchen continues to evolve and grow, it is, for the most part, his dream kitchen. But it won't be for forever. "I'm probably going to go through another change at some point," said Roefs.

His next foreseeable goals include a larger, walk-in dry pantry that he can use to store

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# Creative space

*Where writers write*

by Lynn Woods

**W**RITING IS HARD, concentrated work. The setting that is most conducive to entertaining one's creative muse is an essential component of the process. Some writers can write anywhere: dissolving the boundaries between work and ordinary life enables them to approach the writing task casually, almost surreptitiously — or maybe the only place where they can find a quiet refuge is the neighborhood café, as was the case with J.K. Rowling when she was a struggling single mother. Others must exile themselves from the world and its distractions, perhaps the most famous example being Marcel Proust, scribbling away in his cork-lined bedroom.

We interviewed four writers in the region and discovered that with each, the requirements vary.

## Splendid isolation

When funding cuts to the medical research center where she worked as an



DION OGUST

Will Nixon.

epidemiologist threatened to end her 20-year career, Christine Wade found herself spending a lot of time on her front porch, reading voraciously. One day, bored with writing cover letters and

inspired by the writings of Washington Irving, she was struck like lightning with an idea for a novel: Re-write the story of Rip Van Winkle from the perspective of his wife, who Rip always castigated

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DION OGUST

### Peter Aaron.

as a scold. Besides the literary source, Wade was inspired by the magnificent mountain view that loomed beyond her porch railing.

“It’s a very dreamy, lovely place to write,” she said. Six miles from Tannersville, Wade’s house is perched on the Catskill escarpment, a geographical area inhabited for a millennium by native peoples and a touchstone of inspiration for nineteenth-century novelists, naturalists, poets, and painters. Her property overlooks and is surrounded by land owned by the Bruderhof, further contributing to its splendid isolation.

The novel that Wade subsequently wrote and published, *Seven Locks*, was named the Best Historical Fiction of 2013 by USA Book News and won an honorable mention for the 2013 Langum Prize for Historical Fiction. It contains descrip-

tions of the landscape whose specificity and poetic resonance clearly signifies an intimate knowledge: “The forest was not so thick with trees and vines that you could not find your way through it, but it was chock with stone as blue as water,” Wade writes. “The white foam of streams, which pushed the stones all together and then cut through or frothed over the boulders, always made it seem that the mountains were laughing at us.”

The house itself, an 1888 cedar-shake shingle-style “cottage” that’s a modest version of the grand turreted Victorian mansions gracing Elka Park and Haines Falls, “absolutely fed my imagination,” said Wade. She had purchased it as a weekend place in 1988 and has been living there full-time for the past six years.

“There’s lots of really nice places to sit down with my laptop.” she said.

One favorite place is the round table in front of one of the building’s wide, small-paned windows in the huge living room. Another, for cold winter days, is by the wood-burning stove inset into an enormous stone fireplace. The tub in the bathroom has a mountain view. The large dining room seats twelve and is a popular gathering place for the writers Wade has hosted on retreats.

“There’s something about moving your position,” Wade said. “You get a new bead on your page, a new approach.” The house’s aesthetic of “old and broken” — much of the furniture is original to the building, including the antique stove in the big eat-in kitchen — further feeds her imagination. “Novels are about memory and time, and this house is very evocative.”

At times the isolation can be a challenge, but Wade “doesn’t feel lonely.” She never tires of hiking and exploring in the surrounding woods (she also is a plant person and practitioner of herbal medicine). She is currently working on her second novel, whose context couldn’t be more different than her first. It takes place in downtown Manhattan in the early 1980s, as recalled by a narrator living in the Catskills in 2035. “The main character escapes New York City after she loses her best friend to AIDS and comes here. She’s reflecting back from here in the future. The world is kind of falling apart,” Wade said. “I joke that if the end times come and the whole internet goes down, this is a good place to be. I’m surrounded by the Bruderhof who are self-sufficient people. I have clean water, and it doesn’t flood. I do feel it’s a very special place.”

### From Hoboken to Kingston

Many years ago, while researching his magazine article on childhood and its relationship to nature, poet and author Will Nixon learned about a theory expounding the importance of fort-building on childhood development. He was intrigued. “I started seeing forts everywhere, in movies and storytelling. The character goes into some protected place where a transformation occurs.” There is a parallel between that notion of a small, protective place the child establishes to spy on the world and his writing space, which Nixon described as a kind of “observatory from which you’re broadcasting to the world.”

After leaving New York City at age 40



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JANE BURD

A room in Christine Wade’s home.

and moving to a log cabin in Phoenicia, he carved out such a space in the upstairs loft, where he positioned his desk so he could see the back and front windows and hear the gurgling of a stream. Behind his swivel chair was a table covered with a bear rug, a talisman representing his adopted totem animal. “It was Ed McMahon to my Johnny Carson,” Nixon said.

He subsequently moved to Woodstock and immersed himself in the village, writing *Walking Woodstock*, a collaboration with Michael Perkins, and *The Pocket Guide to Woodstock*, which is a fun read exploring not only the streets but also the psyche of the world’s most famous small town through the many stories of its eccentric inhabitants. His next move was to a house off Sawkill Road, where his talisman was a small sculpture he’d constructed consisting of an orange reflector he’d found in the woods attached to a three-legged stick. His desk also faced a window: “especially at night, when it got dark, I thought of as the fertile void.” If he leaned over during the day, he could spot a bald eagle’s nest.

Ensnared though he was in nature, much of his writing life was fixated elsewhere — on the gritty city of Hoboken as it was in the early 1980s, when he had lived there. Hoboken became the subject and setting for numerous poems collected in *Love in the City of Grudges* as well as a still in-process novel. After his father died, he felt the need to make a dramatic change. Fulfilling his desire for a “brick fix,” he moved to Kingston’s Shirt Factory.

Kingston “was like Hoboken and small enough to have a feeling of community,” he said. “I quickly developed my own hab-



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its, waking up at 6:30 and trading hearing the bald eagle for the train whistle.”

The Shirt Factory was noisy, and his communal hopes for the place were disappointed, so a year and a half later

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DION OGUST

**Beverly Donofrio's home.**

he rented a small house in Midtown Kingston, where he currently resides.

He writes in the converted attic at an L-shaped desk on an old, offline computer, next to a side table covered with papers and books. "I feel comfortable here," he said. "It's familiar, it's private and it's kind of my own little dreamland." When he wants a break from writing, he walks the streets of Kingston taking photographs, a selection of which were recently exhibited

at Green Kill. For now, he's happy to stay put, but the sparseness of his new digs perhaps signifies the ease with which he could make his next move. Transitions bring a "feeling of rejuvenation," he said. "There's a wonderful energy going from one extreme to the other" — city to country to city, and who knows where next?

**Writing in the kitchen**

Beverly Donofrio, the best-selling

author of *Riding in Cars with Boys*, had been living in a monastery run by Carmelite monks in Colorado before she moved to Woodstock in 2015. "The monastery was really great, but I felt I was shirking my responsibility to my aged parents and my young grandkids," she said. She chose Woodstock in part because it was equidistant from her parents' home in Connecticut and her son's home in Brooklyn.

*Riding in Cars with Boys* describes her hard-won independence as a teenaged mother and wife who, after getting divorced, attends an elite Eastern college, young child in tow, and then moves to New York City with her son. There she begins her career as a writer. The book, a huge hit,

spawned a cult movie classic starring Drew Barrymore and directed by Penny Marshall. Two more memoirs followed, *Looking for Mary; or the Beloved Mother and Me* and *Astonished: a Story of Evil, Blessings, Grace and Solace*.

Donofrio has also authored two children's books as well as one for middle-schoolers. Besides working on her fourth memoir, she currently teaches a writing class online as well as a course for the



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low-residency MFA program at Wilkes University.

Finding the space in which to write her memoirs involves both an engagement with and distance from ordinary life. She gravitates to the kitchen. In a 2018 interview in the *Cagibi Express*, Donofrio described placing a vintage white enamel table she'd bought at a flea market in her office, along with hanging pompom-edged curtains her mom had made when Beverly was a kid in the windows. The room was transformed into a faux kitchen.

Unfortunately, Donofrio said, the ruse failed when she started getting shocks from the table caused by her placing her laptop on the metal surface.

"So I gave it to my son and got a great, beautiful, very expensive desk that you can raise higher so that you can stand at it," she said. "I'm a yoga practitioner, and I know that sitting all the time is bad for your body." But after a couple of months of using it, "here I am writing in the kitchen." Her office has been relegated back to its inactive status as the place for her printer, unused desk, and yoga practice. "I think I'm pretty ADD," she explained. "I always want to jump up and leave the writing, and as I got older I just surrendered to that. I get up and start the tomato sauce, do the laundry, sweep wood chips off the floor. It's about 'No, I'm not going to write, I'm writing.'"

Donofrio lives in an IBM-era ranch in the Bearsville Flats that's had several walls knocked down, opening up the kitchen to the living space, which has a cathedral ceiling. A series of icon paintings she made in Mexico — she said they're called "writing icons" and were copied from an original as a form of prayer — hang in a row on one of the salmon-colored walls, while a large painting of the Virgin of Guadalupe adorns another.

Donofrio calls herself a homebody and loves taking daily hikes with her dog. She doesn't think she'll ever move again. But most of her life, she's been peripatetic, living in LA, Maine, Mexico, Missouri and, as mentioned, Colorado. A change in scene is part and parcel of her creative process. For each of her three memoirs, she lived for a while in an unfamiliar place, renting an apartment funded by the advance she received from selling her proposal. For her last book, "I left the monastery and lived in the holy land in Missouri, where I

finished it. For *Looking for Mary*, I went to Mexico, and for my first book, I went to New Hampshire and then Mexico." The advantage of being in a new place? "I have no friends or distractions; it's just me and my work."

"I'm probably at that point for the book I'm working on now," she said. It addresses a new set of issues: "At this stage of my life, I'm looking at the end and not really am the person I had hoped I would be. I'm wondering if I'm going to get there or accept who I am and be comfortable about that. Did I see things truly or just impose my belief on a lot of stuff?"

She added, "I really love this stage of my life. I'm the most content and excited, and I have great faith. I don't think dying is the end, but leads to the next great adventure. With the diminishment of physical abilities and stamina comes an increase in other stuff that's more important to me."

### No friend to minimalism

Writer and *Chronogram* music and arts editor Peter Aaron, the author of *If You Like the Ramones*, *The Band FAQ* and *I know Better Now: My Life Before, During and After the Ramones*, written with Richie Ramone, lives in a 1924 Craftsman house in Uptown Kingston that defies, in every fiber of its being, the home decorating trend of minimalism and contractor gray. Judging from photographs he sent this writer, his abode doesn't merely preserve the original floors, doors and dark woodwork but is a shrine to vintage pop culture, powerfully evoking the past.

Framed posters of film noir classics and punk bands, including Aaron's old New York band, the Chrome Cranks, cover the walls. Acres of bookshelves are crammed with novelty tchotchkes and mementoes of lost time, including a 1950s Space-Age metal lunch box and thermos, detective magazines, Edison wax disks, and figurines and cutouts of former pop culture icons both obscure and ubiquitous, including James Dean, the RCA dog, and Porky Pig. There's a "Ghoul Music" album cover propped against a row of books that expresses the conjoined popular taste for the macabre and hilarious.

"My favorite thing is a Victrola made between 1910 and 1920, which I bought as my fortieth birthday present," Aaron said. "I can take a record pressed in

shellac, which they processed with a mixture of materials, put it on and play it." Rejecting the digital technology of today, Aaron prefers the tactile approach. "When people send in music for me to review, a pile of CDs on my desk is more of a reminder than a bunch of links."

The former dining room functions as the music room, with a wall of LPs — the rock section; jazz, blues and ethnic music reside in the basement — serving as a fertile resource for his weekly midnight radio show, *Go Go Kitty*, on Radio Kingston ("I mix familiar edge artists with stuff that's more challenging or surprising"). Aaron also writes liner notes and, pre-pandemic, was a dj at clubs and singer in his latest band, Harambe's Heroes, performing covers with a couple of old friends from his hometown of Cincinnati. Sometimes he'll improvise on his guitar and record it on voice memo on his phone. "I'm a three-chord hack," he said. "I never started playing music to become a musician, but rather to get my emotions out and assert myself."

He writes on an antique rolltop desk in his upstairs office. A vintage typewriter sits on an adjacent end table, as though it was a spectral channeler. In the morning, after making coffee, feeding the cats, and turning off the phone, he'll head upstairs and "keep writing until I've wrung out all the possible juice in my brain." He likes having a dedicated space where "the only reason I go in is to work." Around 4:30, he'll take a shower and do errands. Going downstairs to do other things "gives my head a break."

Aaron concedes that his obsession with collecting is "a bit ridiculous. I'm always acquiring more stuff, and for now it's contained." One suspects the dream-like funhouse of fascinations down Memory Lane that's gained bulk and dimension in his home has taken on cosmic proportions in his imagination and fired up his creative synapses. "The more you get into music, the more you see everything is connected," Aaron observed. "It's all one long story. People from the past or future era are coming from the same set of emotions and motivations ... Sonically there's maybe a big difference between Jelly Roll Morton and Iggy Pop, but the core essence is the same. They're trying to be bold, make human connections and do something rough and beautiful."

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# Crafters and makers

*“I’m tired of moving around”*

by Cloey Callahan

## Steve Heller and Martha Frankel

Sculptor Steve Heller of Fabulous Furniture and writer Martha Frankel have resided in their 1961 1400-square-foot ranch-style home east of Boiceville since they moved here in 1983. Throughout the years, they have renovated, adding unique touches to make it their dream home. They never plan to move out.

The original home, which reminded Heller of the ones he grew up with in Queens, was on the market for nearly a year before the couple decided to make a commitment. The boxy, dark interior did not lend itself to being a comfortable place for inspiration. Mere hours after the purchase, Heller was knocking down walls inside. Over time, the space has become exactly what they wanted.

“It came with a lot of land, was in the middle of nowhere, and had an extra-long garage, which was perfect for my ‘59



Interior design by Steve Heller.

Caddy,” said Heller, whose work building and painting cars has earned him and his co-worker Mike Karpf accolades.

Heller has made all the furniture in the home, including items like a mantelpiece

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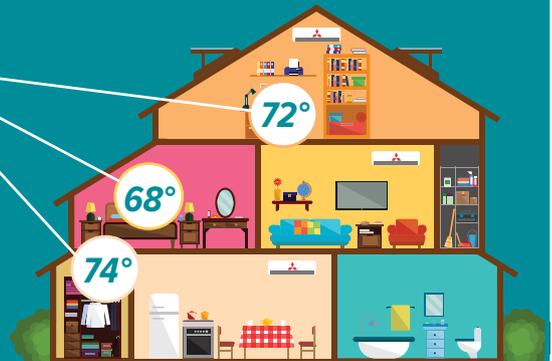
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Steve Heller and Martha Frankel.

with 1959 Chevy tail lights.

Frankel, who works at home, created a light and airy office space with special touches of inspiration on the walls, including photographs of past celebrity



Interior design by Steve Heller.

interviews she conducted. Heller keeps home and work separate. If he thinks of a new piece for their home, he heads over to the shop to get started.

Their home continues to evolve. Recently, they added a new door with a big window to the front of the house, replacing the former one that didn't allow for enough light. Next, Frankel said, will be the repainting of the

fireplace (which they do every few years) and adding guest space.

"We've always loved this house," said Frankel. "It's Steve's work of art. It's a living sculpture that Steve has always worked on. It's just beautiful."

**Marysa Sacerdote**

Marysa Sacerdote makes handmade nature-inspired jewelry from recycled materials out of her home studio in Midtown Kingston. Sacerdote and her

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Marysa Sacerdote and a sampling of her work.

husband, a woodworker, have called Kingston home for four years after relocating from the Midwest. For a year they resided in the Brush Factory. When they purchased the Kingston home, it was a fixer-upper that didn't even have insulation. Since then, they have created indoor and outdoor studios and put an addition onto the house.

The then-master bedroom was converted into a studio with south-facing

windows for natural sunlight and scenic views – perfect for Sacerdote to draw inspiration from.

Outside is where the dirty work happens. They ordered small outdoor structures to create a studio for his woodworking and her casting work.

“We converted the master bedroom into my jewelry workshop, which is up on the second floor,” said Sacerdote. “It gives me privacy to work, my own separate

space to work, great light and a view of the mountains.”

The balance between indoor and outdoor studios is among one of Sacerdote's favorite things about her home. “It's cool having the back yard separate buildings for the really grimy stuff,” explained Sacerdote. “It's separate but it's inside .... I would say I have my dream studio. The only thing I'd ever want is more tools.”

When she's not in one of the studios,

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Karen Berelowitz and her studio.

Sacerdote draws inspiration from her plants around the property and in her garden to draw inspiration from. Her rose bushes were the inspiration for her rose stud earrings.

"I have my rose bushes that I grow, look at, and pick them to transform them into something that is metal, which would then last for generations," explained Sacerdote. "That's super cool."

Succulents can be found in the house.

Living in the Hudson Valley offers her the opportunity to have easy access to nature. She often goes on walks and collects pine cones and other botanicals to take back to her home studio and turn into something wearable.

"It's a lifestyle in that way," said Sacerdote.

### Karen Berelowitz

South Africa, Los Angeles, San Diego, Costa Rica, Washington, D.C. —those are all of the places Karen Berelowitz has lived before finding herself in the Hudson

Valley. Here, too, she has similarly jumped around from Woodstock, Saugerties and finally Kingston to set more permanent roots.

She originally came to the Hudson Valley to work at Rhinebeck's Omega Institute for Holistic Studies after a break from her Washington, D.C. job in international development work. Her artistic path took off after deciding to sell her drawings at a small crafts fair.

Berelowitz described the start of her business as unexpected, but something she realized she loved. When her condo in Washington, D.C. had a fire and she couldn't go back for a while, she began



to think of the Hudson Valley as a more long-term residence.

"There came a time where I thought, well, I never lived in Kingston," said Berelowitz. "I was looking around and saw a storefront that had a live/work feel to it. There was a separate

room available on the Rondout. I thought, This would be fun ... maybe I'll open a store and live in the room."

She impulsively took a two-year lease and decided to open her own store with everything she needed, including a studio and the living space, under one roof.

"All of a sudden I was in this luxurious 20-by-25-foot space that I gave half

of it to my studio where I could set up permanently for the first time," said Berelowitz. Around 30 other artists are now represented on consignment in the space.

Her business, Karma Bee, grew with the new move. Instead of finding space to silkscreen in a short-term rental, she has an entire studio to create as much as she wants.

After spending four years at the location, she moved one last time to a 1894



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Kasmira Demyan's office/studio.

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home in Kingston in 2016. "I saw it and I thought. This is it," said Berelowitz. "I'm tired of moving around."

The place checked off everything from her list: a back yard (where she spends

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a lot of her time), a garage (perfect for loading and unloading for weekly farmers' markets), and ample space (including an office for her computer and external monitors).

"When I was looking for a house and I met with my Realtor. I said I basically am looking for a back yard with the house attached to it where I can go indoors when necessary," said Berelowitz. "The back yard is my absolute go-to space."

It's been almost five years in her new home. She loves it. But she can see herself potentially relocating with her partner Stephen down the road to somewhere new.

**Kasmira Demyan**

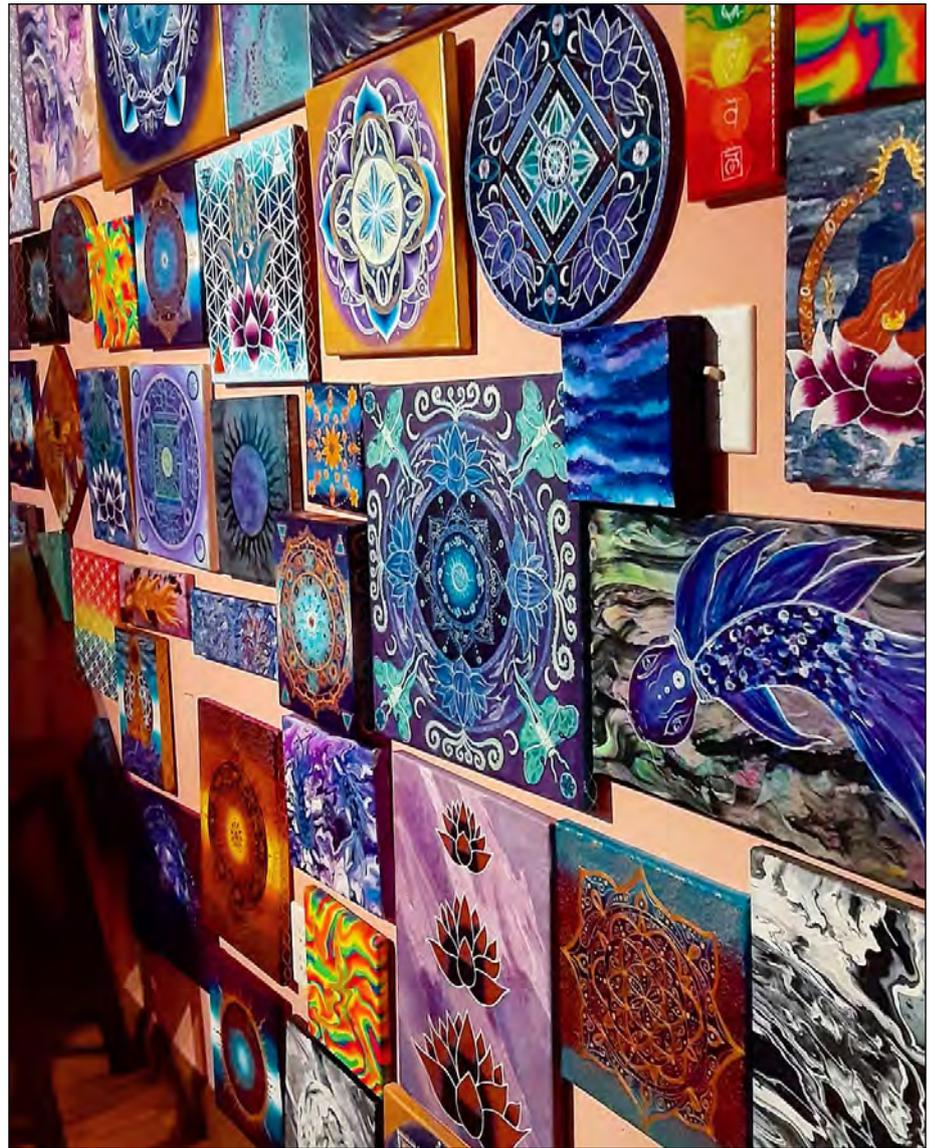
Kasmira Demyan has lived in the Hudson Valley her entire life, and in Kingston since 2004. At her home now, Demyan's mother redid the detached garage on the property to create a studio space for Demyan. She now spends almost all her time there.

Demyan is a visual artist who "creates acrylic paintings inspired by Eastern and Western spiritual traditions," with a blend between "traditional art styles and contemporary abstraction."

"Over the past couple of years, I've really expanded my work and branched out to create more of a creative space with organizing," said Demyan.

She describes the space as "chaotic," but in a way that seems to work for her. Inside her studio, the walls are filled with both her original artwork and other artists' work she is inspired by, making it a sort of gallery space.

Each area is dedicated for a certain



A wall of work by Kasmira Demyan.

thing – in one space she has all her prints and merchandise to sell, another spot includes her painting supplies, a place for

her freelance work for Carole Shiber Art to Table Designs, and then finally a place to sit down and create her other work.

"It's very colorful and a lot to process when you first walk in because it's so much work that has every single color," said Demyan.

If she ever relocated, Demyan said she would search for a similar space to what she has now.

In the warmer months, Demyan sleeps in her studio to "get right into the work" when she wakes up. When she's not in her studio, she likes to get out into the community to see people and for a change from her work environment.

Demyan was diagnosed with a rare congenital condition called Goldenhar syndrome, but she doesn't want that to be at the forefront of her work. "My work speaks for itself, but [my diagnosis] is a big part of my life," said Demyan.



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# Hear here

*Local musicians enjoy a life of greater domesticity*

by MK Burnett

**H**ow do you make your home work for your career when, under normal circumstances, your career takes you all over the world?

Out of everyone who never expected to have to transition to working primarily from home, musicians have had perhaps the biggest adjustment to make. With touring on hold indefinitely, live shows limited to outdoor only, and recording made complicated by safety concerns, the industry looks drastically different than it did 18 months ago.

The bright side for many artists has been a renewed sense of appreciation for the homes they previously saw only in the brief rest periods between tours.

### Ready for an orchestra

Take, for example, Lara Hope and Matt Goldpaugh, who prior to the events of 2020 spent more time on the road with their rockabilly band Lara Hope & The Ark-Tones than in their Kingston apartment. The couple bought their first home, also in Kingston, early last year.

“Finding a home that we could afford on



Matt Goldpaugh and Lara Hope at home.

a fluctuating musician’s income was [a] main priority,” Lara explains. “We were fortunate enough to find both! We really wanted a space that could accommodate our touring musician friends — and family — when they come to the area. When I count up all of the spaces we have that

someone could potentially sleep on — the couches, futons, bunk bed, regular beds, hammock, etc. — I think we could squeeze in about 10 guests. I guess we’re ready for an orchestra!”

Lara and Matt’s home also features a beautiful back yard complete with

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a tiki bar and plenty of room to grow vegetables. “I am so thankful to have a backyard, after living in an apartment for the past decade,” says Lara. “In the warmer months, I spent most of my days outside: gardening, barbecuing, playing with the dogs, reading, playing music. It kept me sane. We even hosted a socially distant backyard house concert, which we plan to do more of in the future.”

And then there’s the large garage building, which the couple have converted into a rehearsal and recording space. They self-recorded an EP there under their side project, the Gold Hope Duo, entitled “Songs in the Key of Quarantine,” with the kind of learn-as-you-go spirit that’s endemic to the Hudson Valley’s music scene.

“We’d also never live-streamed a show before,” says Lara, referring to the series of Monday night Facebook “concerts” she and Matt have made a part of their routine since early 2020. “It took us some time to figure out the right lighting, the right internet connection to stream smoothly, the right mics and interfaces to work with, in order to have a somewhat professional looking and sounding show, from our living room. It’s still a work in progress, but I think there is a charm to the rawness of it all.”

Lara Hope & The Ark-Tones have a new album “Here To Tell The Tale” arriving June 25 and can be seen on livestream via Facebook and Youtube, every Monday from 7 to 8pm.



Lara and Matt’s living room/studio.

### Working at Split Rock Studio

An at-home recording space was a priority long before Covid for bassist and recording engineer Jason Sarubbi, who created Split Rock Studio in the basement of the New Paltz home he shares with his wife and daughters. A native of the Hudson Valley, Jason settled back in the area in the early 2000s. “The post-9/11 real-estate market in [New Paltz] was much like the current Covid real-estate market,” says Jason. “Homes were selling very fast, and there weren’t

many to choose from in the ‘affordable’ price range.” With limited options to choose from, the family’s needs had to come first. Luckily they were able to find a multilevel home with a full basement perfect for converting into a fully functional recording studio.

“Work from home culture means my whole family is often, but not always, working from home too, and that is not always good as far as interruptions and noise level are concerned,” Jason explains. “My next studio will be pandemic-



Jason Sarubbi’s Split Rock Studio, in the basement of his New Paltz home.

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proof. Didn't think about the need for that when I built my current space."

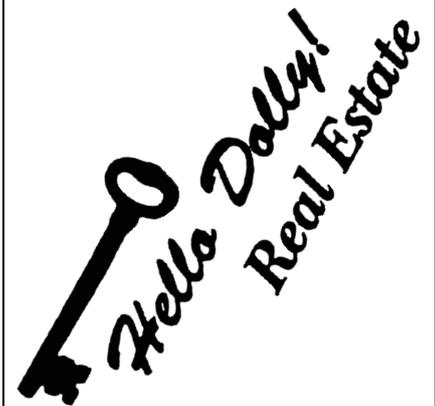
The back deck is his favorite spot in the house to get work done. Though it's not always an option, it sure is nice when I can be out there on a warm, sunny afternoon."

Split Rock Studio has been as active as ever during lockdown. "I just finished editing and mastering an audiobook, and I'm also working on the new record, *Twenty-Five Traditionals* from Tom Adelman who makes music under the name Camden Joy."

**A semi-finished basement**

Singer-songwriter Matt Pond is a more recent Hudson Valley transplant. "I moved here in 2015," he says of his uptown Kingston home. "But I've had extended layovers in Tivoli, Rhinebeck, Hudson, Saugerties. We recorded a few albums at Bearsville Studios. For years, I banged around in a small cabin off Speare Road and broke bread with turkeys, coyotes and of course bears.

"The Catskills are the magnet, they've always pulled me in," he says. "They remind me of my early life in New Hampshire. Freezing and skiing, climbing and



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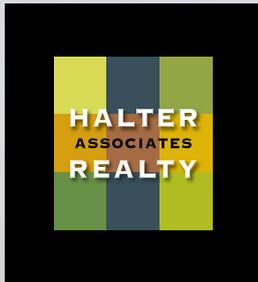


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falling.”

Loving where he lives has been key in this last year of being off the road, relearning how to nest, and of course, diving deep into home improvement projects.

“This has probably been the most productive year of my life,” says Matt. “We finished the basement, and I got rid of years of useless junk. The cairns of unused belongings have blown away. The house now functions in ways I’ve only seen on television — the clothes are hung up and folded, the dishes are clean and in the cabinets. My excellent bandmate, Chris Hansen, and I no longer rock in the dining room. There are no passing cars in my vocal takes any more.”

Although the house wasn’t intended as a recording studio — not necessarily, at



Matt Pond and companions.

least — Matt did consider its viability as a practice space from the beginning. “This house had hardwood floors underneath the wall-to-wall carpets and a semi-finished basement. And I’ve spent a lifetime looking for proper practice space! The neighbors have only complained once. The cops came by and tried to join our band. It wasn’t a good fit.”

It’s crucial to have tolerant neighbors as a work-from-home musician, particularly in up-town Kingston, where space between homes is often limited. But Matt and his bandmates have also made an effort to be considerate neighbors by adopting the most soundproof part of the house as their primary creative space.

“The basement is my place to get loud.

Amps, drums, axes. Choose your weapon. There’s also a couch for playing acoustic guitar on my back. There’s really no separation. Work and relaxation have learned how to coexist inside my head.”



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Isolation has been a major theme in Matt's music even prior to 2020, so last year the flood-gates let loose. Matt and his collaborators are getting ready to mix and master a new collection of songs written and recorded at the uptown Kingston house. And there's been time for altruistic creativity, too.

"While making our small corner of the universe



Matt Pond's breakfast nook.

better, I realized there were millions of kids at home that could become masters of music during these pandemic days. So we recorded and released an album and gave all the proceeds on Bandcamp to Save the Children. It's called Songs of Disquiet — mostly covers and instrumental. It has my favorite original self-discovery number, The Start."

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Lisa Halter's dream home, outside and in.

# Realtors

*Homes are filled with emotional baggage*

by Cloey Callahan

## Lisa Halter

Lisa Halter, of Bearsville's Halter Associates Realty, found her dream home in Woodstock when she did a price opinion for one of her agents. She realized this was, in fact, exactly what she was looking for herself.

"We knew we were going to ultimately move, but an agent of mine was about to list a house and he wanted me to go look at it and check his price," said Halter. "We went over and visited it in the dark and pouring rain. It had been abandoned for a year. We took a look around and said, We'll take it."

Halter has lived in the area since 1999, relocating from the city. Her first home was "a beautiful antique farmhouse with a lot of land," which they renovated. When Halter Associates Realty opened seven years ago, she became a lot busier and wanted to be closer to the realty group's two offices in Woodstock and Kingston.

"I wanted to be closer but I hadn't even really started the



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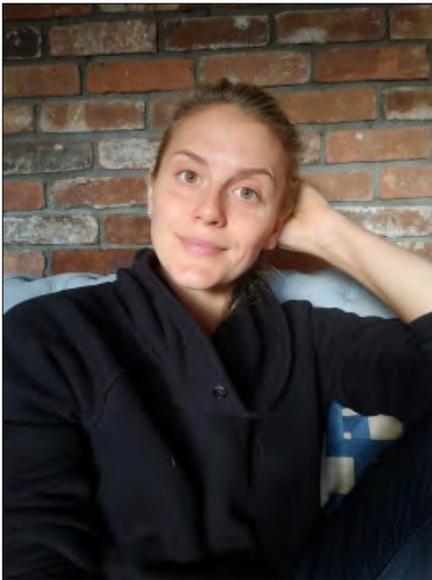
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Lindsay Stevens, and a room in her home.



search process,” said Halter. “I guess that is one of the benefits of being a broker is that I see things as they come on the market.”

One might think a broker might have a special method for home-buying for themselves. Halter went with her gut. While the place needed work, the location was unbeatable. There’s a lot of open space and natural light throughout.

Her favorite part of the home is its mountain and wildlife views. “We have incredible, huge windows that look out over the field and mountain,” said Halter. “Through the windows we see all kinds of wildlife – fox, deer, coyotes, wolves, eagles. We even had a mink living near the stream. It’s a great location.”

Inside are his-and-her offices for herself

and her husband to do work from home. Her home has a lot of open space and natural light throughout.

**Lindsay Stevens**

Lindsay Stevens experienced in herself exactly what she’s been preaching to her clients for years – how mindful you have to be of your emotions when it comes to home-buying.

She moved to a beautifully built home her husband had built in 2009 when she relocated back to the Hudson Valley from New York City. The Highland home was the first new construction project her husband built for himself, so it was an emotional rollercoaster when they decided five years later to move closer to Stevens’ Real Estate in New Paltz, even more so because the home they were moving into was the one Stevens had grown up in.

“Until you’re in the process, you don’t realize how truly emotional it is,” said Stevens. “The home is filled with so much emotional baggage. That is a lot of it for me.”

The New Paltz home was her entire childhood and a place of solitude. It was a 1960s retro split-level that needed repair and renovation. For the past four years, she and her husband have been considering what changes to make. They plan to get started this year.

“We were excited about the idea of being able to renovate this house and making it something unique,” said Stevens. “I think the older homes have something newer homes sort of lack, and that’s charm and character.”

Stevens is looking forward to taking out a wall between the living room and kitchen, creating a more open floor plan where family can gather in a comfortable manner. She and her husband plan to invest in solar power to make the house eco-friendly and energy-conscious.

But she’s happy with the house. “It’s dated and it needs a facelift, but it’s so beautiful,” said Stevens. There’s an outdoor living space with a screened-in porch and a den with exposed beams and a brick wall.

Stevens is looking forward to raising her six-year-old and ten-year-old daughters where she grew up. She feels as though she has ended up right where she was sup-

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Laurie Ylvisaker's home.

posed to be, just like others who might be on their own home-buying experiences.

"It's a journey," said Stevens. "It's a hard decision and an emotional decision and a huge financial decision. You have to go through the journey, and you'll ultimately end up where you're supposed to be. There is no greater place than home."

**Laurie Ylvisaker**

Laurie Ylvisaker, who is descended from one of Woodstock's Maverick Art Colony's oldest families, has resided in her Woodstock two-story contemporary farmhouse home since the early 2000s. After living in California and Florida, she came home, to the area where she was born.

She first resided in a home in Stone Ridge, but because most of her time was spent in Woodstock she wanted to move closer.

"One day I was driving along and I saw this little sign 'for sale' and it was a really pretty meadow and an old barn," said Ylvisaker. "I went and looked but it didn't have a house on it .... I bought the land and then I built the house."

Taking a large piece of land and building on it is one of her favorite kinds of marketing to do as a broker. She said she "really understands land and walking in the woods."

She wanted her own home to blend in with the land and complement the nature around it.

The house was built to capture natural light just right at any time of day. The second floor juxtaposes the light, airy and open feel of the first floor with a cozy space perfect for winding down

and relaxing.

The versatility of her home also allowed for a variety of ways to entertain guests – whether it be a large party on her 22 acres of land (she even hosted a summer wedding for a friend) or a cup of tea on her couch.

Ylvisaker has never lived in one spot as long as she has in this Woodstock home. She has at times considered what else is out there.

"It's like going out to a buffet or seeing three amazing desserts in front of you and knowing you should only have one piece," said Ylvisaker. "I do see some great houses, and I have fallen in love with houses. I haven't pulled the trigger yet to move on."

She admits she would do things a little differently if she started over with a home-build. But at the same time, she's okay with how things are.

"The minute it's over, you say, Oh, gosh, I should have changed that or shouldn't have made that room so small," said Ylvisaker. She accepts that nothing is perfect or permanent. "That makes life much easier," she said, "We all have our blemishes, and so do houses."

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PHOTOS BY LEE REICH

Mid-June, vegetable garden.

by Erin Quinn

*“When the world wearies and society fails to satisfy, there is always the garden.”*

— Minnie Aumonier

**W**HAT MAKES THE perfect property for a seasoned or a newly inspired gardener? Is it the views from the windows? Is it the soil or the proximity to running water? Does he/she look for fertile soil? Ample space to garden? Southern exposure? A place for a garden shed or greenhouse?

“Six hours or more of direct sunlight and a deer fence is all I need,” said expert

gardener and veteran New Paltz High School environmental science teacher Cathy Law, who engages her students through their curriculum with a garden she started in the high-school courtyard. “The hardscape matters to me,” she said. “The trails, rock walls and pebble ponds that give the garden structure and interest. Also, a yard that is big enough to have undulating garden borders is key because straight beds are boring to the eye.”

## The consummate gardener

Lee Reich, author of several gardening books including *Weedless Gardening*, *The Northeast Gardener’s Year* and *The Ever Curious Gardener: Using a Little Natural*

*Science for a Much Better Garden*,” agreed that lots of sunlight was key. Sun, sun and more sun is what gardeners seek --- whilst hopefully listening to their doctors and dermatologists and covering their skin with SPF

Part of why Reich loves his domicile is that his property is bathed in sunshine, so much so that it encouraged him to plant some trees for shade. He grew a mini-forest at one end of his property where there are river birches, sugar maples, and a buartnut (a hybrid of our native butternut and Japanese heartnut).

Though there are gardeners who either by choice or necessity cultivate shade and water plants, Reich said that for most

drainage and sun are very important. They're essential for growing vegetables and fruits.

Soil fertility can almost always be assured. Reich relies on his rich organic mulches and abundant compost.

You might want to consider investing in toolsheds or indoor growing areas as part of your garden-loving domicile, Reich's garage serves as his extensive toolshed. "I wish it was neater," he admitted. "But I'm very lucky with indoor growing areas."

Reich has plenty of sunny windows on which sit lemon trees, rosemary plants, and bay laurel, olive and pineapple guava. There are also run-of-the-mill house plants. Reich also has a "minimally heated greenhouse," where he can grow his cool-temperature salad fixings all winter. Of course, it's also a place to raise seedlings, later to be transplanted outside.

Not everyone has their own home or property to work with, There has recently been a plethora of "small-space gardening" books, columns and online courses which have been of particular appeal during the pandemic, a time when people tied to their apartments, studios or shared spaces were craving that connection with the earth.

**Gardening on the patio**

Jan Jensen has a small apartment in Kingston. She was let go from her waitressing job because the restaurant she worked at closed down during the pandemic. "When late spring came and we were all still stuck in our houses and had nowhere to go, I got myself to Adams, bought some dirt and some seeds and some pots, and turned my little deck,

which thankfully, faces south, into a botanical garden," she said. "It's nothing fancy, but before I turned it into a little patio-type garden it just collected junk. There was a busted bike and two broken chairs and a table that just had more crap on it."

Jensen cleared off her small balcony, and lined it mostly with clay pots filled with tomato plants, pepper plants, and a host of herbs including basil, rosemary, lemon balm and lavender. "I love lavender because it calms me. Just the act of gardening calms me, even though it's not your typical garden because it's all in pots."

As her patio garden grew, Jensen added wind chimes and painted a wooden box that she had found left outside. She poured dirt into it and planted annual flowers. "Anyone can be a gardener." Jensen claims. "You just have to start with a few seeds and some plants and make sure you have enough sun and water." She says the deck is now the favorite 'room' in her house. "I missed it all winter."

**Gardening for renters**

Nicole Conte, an administrator of the uber-popular Facebook group, the Hud-

son Valley Home and Garden Plants, rents a home. She and her partner have invested a ton of sweat equity in the property and have reaped the rewards, as well as gardener dilemmas like groundhogs and chipmunks feeding on their crops without being invited.

"We rent a beautiful, 1920s home in Highland," said Conte. "We had no landscaping here. We could see that someone had once planted perennials,

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but they were hidden within overgrown weeds and brush.”

She told her partner that she was not investing in a garden in a rental. And that was that.

One of Conte’s friends had some spiderwort that she was dividing and wanted to give away. “I decided to take some, and that was the start of creating this beautiful outdoor space,” Conte says. Trying to get a small plot ready for the spiderwort, they unearthed glasses, toys, dishes and other relics from home-steaders past.

After planting spiderwort, hostas and a few other plants in their tiny garden outside their rented abode, Conte said she felt content. That satisfied feeling did not last long. Staring out her front porch at the grass lawn, she decided that she wanted to rip it all up and put perennials in. Grass is to gardeners what walls are to painters.

Hudson Valley gardener Valerie Dubord’s lawn, for instance, is gone. It was the first thing to go when she relocated here. She’s planted several varieties of berries and medicinal herbs. She hopes to plant a food garden in an 18-foot circle where the pool was. The location has full sun and good drainage.

One year, Conte and her partner purchased soil and mulch from a local company and turned the grass into a field of perennials. The next year they cleared out the brush in their landlord’s backyard full of brush and trees and planted vegetables with a wildflower garden all around it for pollination.

Conte, a craft hot-sauce maker, has been growing a small amount of super-hot peppers the past few years. This year the couple started more than a hundred red-hot peppers indoors. Now it looks like they’ll have to expand once again. They’ll be watching for signs of blight on the peppers and tomatoes, as they experienced last year.

Not all gardening wished come true. Despite their conversion of an overgrown rental property into a garden oasis, complete with an array of perennials, fruits, vegetables, herbs and even hot-peppers, Conte said, they have found that for some reason they can’t seem to grow a sunflower. Their attempts have



End of May, entrance to vegetable garden.



Fruit trees and daffodils.

been either eaten as they sprout or when they are flowering. “It’s so frustrating,” she says with furrowed brow.

This and other issues led her to help create the Facebook page where gardeners can learn from each other, collectively trouble shoot pests and critters and blight, trade and swap plants, and expand their knowledge with other people in

their pocket of the world.

### How important gardening can be

I asked Lee Reich what part of his home or property he could never imagine doing without. “My gardens, of course, especially my vegetable gardens and fruit plantings, most especially my blueberry and blackcurrant bushes, which are my two favorite and most successful fruits,” he responded.

If disaster struck in the form of a major fire at home, most of us would grab the children

and the photo albums. The gardener might let the house go in order to save their prized fruit tree or flowering bush.

*To learn more about Lee Reich and visit his garden, go to <http://www.leereich.com/blog> and <http://leereich.com>. To learn more about the FB group go to <https://www.facebook.com/groups/1821215791239301>.*

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