

# Buy Local Expo Sept. 13 In Saugerties

## Put Your Business In The Spotlight

Ulster County's Largest Networking Event of the Year will take place next month at the newly renovated Diamond Mills Hotel & Conference Center, 25 S. Partition St. in Saugerties.

This year's Buy Local Expo is from noon to 5 p.m. Sept. 13<sup>th</sup>. Close to 100 local small businesses and organizations will be sponsoring or exhibiting this year, including the Presenting Sponsor Naccarato Insurance, and the Principal Sponsor Timely Signs.

Naccarato Insurance always has a prime location and John Naccarato and his staff love greeting attendees as they enter. We love this event and the way that it brings all of us together," Naccarato said. "Throughout the year, a lot of us get caught up in our businesses, so this is a great reconnecting point. You not only have the potential to expand your customer base but strengthen your existing business relationships. It's definitely worth supporting and coming out to."

Timely Signs Owner and Vice President Joe Beichert said he always likes to see what businesses are up to and how much they have grown and are better or different.

"I think the Buy Local Expo is definitely the best event that the Chamber does each year," he said. "It's an opportunity for a company like ours to meet face-to-face with the people that we do business with all year long. It's an opportunity to thank them for all the years of using our company and to serve them."

"The Chamber does a great job of focusing on how they can assist businesses. We've always been a proud sponsor of this event and I can't say enough about the folks at the Chamber."

Miriam Gibbons of PuroClean Professional Restoration calls the Chamber's Buy Local Expo "the best form of advertising."

"I can put an ad in the paper, but you may turn the page and never look at it, but if you're coming to the Expo, you're going to see me because you're going to walk up and down every aisle," said Gibbons, an account executive for the Kingston company.

Gibbons noted that the event is also free and open to the public. Businesses usually demonstrate their services and offer nifty handouts from their booths, and you can even chat with the owners and employees.

"I get ultimate exposure to businesses as well as the community because it's open to anybody," Gibbons said. "That keeps my business top of mind and at the end of the day, that's what I want ... to be top of mind so people remember me and will call me for business in the future."

The Expo draws a diversity of Chamber members, including for-profit, non-profit, and even government entities like Ulster County Tourism.

Lisa Berger, Director of Ulster County Tourism, said the department she now leads was one of the Expo's first sponsors. She likes to remind people of all the Hudson Valley has to offer.

"So much of the work we do is with local businesses, and we see this as the premier event for supporting and promoting local businesses, especially those in the hospitality industry," she said. "It's not just people from outside the area who enjoy all the wonderful attractions we have for people to see and do in our hospitality and leisure sectors."

"A lot of times, people don't look in their own backyard for the most fun things to see and do. We want everybody to know about them. We always have so much fun at the Expo, letting people know all the great things there are to see and do here."

Saugerties businesses like Sawyer Savings Bank, a Welcoming Sponsor of the Expo, take advantage of the event's proximity.

"We enjoy attending the Buy Local Expo each year as it helps Sawyer Savings Bank raise



our brand awareness, cultivate meaningful business relationships, and can generate leads," said James Whitaker, the bank's President. "It is also a great way to showcase Saugerties as it takes place at Diamond Mills Conference Center, right down the street from our main branch. We are always impressed by both new and well-established businesses who attend, offering innovative and novel products that meet the needs of the Hudson Valley."

Non-profits like the Ulster County Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals (SPCA), also find the event worthwhile. Executive Director Gina Carbonari said SPCA staffers use the Expo to educate the public about the organization's mission and answer questions about animals.

"We've found it's a great opportunity to be able to network with other businesses in the area and let people know a little bit more about all of the programs and services that we provide beyond just taking in animals and adopting them," said Carbonari. "We have so

much we do here that people are not aware of. It really gives us a chance to network with a lot of other businesses. So many people come in from the community as well, so it gives us an opportunity to share what we do."

"A lot of people are surprised when they hear about all we do and what our organization is all about."

Berger said the entire concept of putting on such a large networking event for businesses benefits the county.

"It's a great idea to have local businesses meet and talk to each other, and it's a great opportunity for the public if they haven't had the opportunity to meet some of these businesses," Berger said. "We are enthusiastic supporters of the Chamber and this event."

For more information to sponsor or exhibit at the Expo, contact Allison Costanzo, at (845) 338-5100 ext. 7, or Allison@UlsterChamber.org. For more information on the Expo or to register online, go to www.UlsterChamber.org.

# Destination Distillery

## Hudson House 'Dream Come True'

About 10 years ago, Charles Ferri and his wife, Melissa, were driving along U.S. Route 9W when they spotted a grand old waterfront structure —hauntingly beautiful in its shuttered state.

"My wife forced me to stop the car," says Ferri, a former banker and the founder of Star Vodka, a luxury craft vodka produced in Oregon. "The property was gated and deserted. I thought, 'What is this place?'"

Curiosity got the better of them, so like a couple of urban explorers, they made their way through the gate and overgrowth and were flabbergasted by the up-close view of the forsaken Italianate villa with sweeping views of the Hudson River.

"My wife insisted we should call someone about the property," Ferri said. "After we got home, that yellow building stuck in my head. It had such a beauty to it, even though it was in bad shape."

Long story short, Ferri found the 27-acre property in West Park listed on Zillow for \$550,000. He learned that the gargantuan building had served as the Christian Brothers' Monastery for 100 years.

"I couldn't help myself," Ferri said. "I remember running to the bedroom and waking up my wife. 'The building is for sale,' I told her. It was like a dream come true."

It also just happened to sync with what he and his longtime business associate, Paul Seres, an internationally known hospitality mogul, had been envisioning for some time: A destination distillery that would not only produce ultra-premium, limited-batch spirits, but double as a luxury wedding and events venue.

The pair bought the historic property in 2015 and after six grueling years of restoring it and navigating through governmental red tape, Ferri and Seres debuted The Hudson House, which can accommodate up to 300 guests, in October 2021.

"We had a great turnout, and so far, visitors have come from around the world—Japan, China, Africa, South America and just about every state," Ferri said. "As a waterfront destination distillery, it's the first of its kind in the nation, and it's gratifying for us to know that people are enjoying the property. This is like a sanctuary to forget about the troubles of the world and enjoy



the moment that they're in."

Built in the 1850s, the mansion had two previous occupants prior to the Christian Brothers—the first being Archibald Russell, a philanthropist and the founder of Ulster Savings Bank. After he died, his widow, Helen, sold the estate in 1885 to Eugene Durkee, founder of the E.R. Durkee & Co. Spice Dealers. The Christian Brothers purchased it in the early 1900s and ran it as a monastery for 100 years.

As The Hudson House, it features a 3,500-square-foot event space consisting of a parlor, living room, library, sun porch and bar. The Hudson House also boasts a 4,000-square-foot deck overlooking the Hudson River, one of the region's largest.

Melissa Ferri, an events planner, designed the building's interior and exterior, mixing modern touches with original features, including antique doors, crown moldings and floors.

The craft distillery, which is open to the public for weekend tours, is housed in the crypt-like basement and produces limited-batch Black Creek Bourbon, Rye Whiskey and Altair Vodka, an evolution of Star Vodka. This summer, The Hudson House plans to launch a line of gin. Several tasting rooms are featured on the grounds.

The Hudson House also features a cocktail menu as well as beer and wine selections in partnership with local craft purveyors. Another highlight is its seasonal cuisine prepared by Executive Chef Greg DeMichiel, a graduate of the Culinary Institute of America, with more than 25 years of experience working at restaurants from New York to Los Angeles.

Future plans include a boutique hotel with 25 rooms, the installation of a dock for boaters and opening up more expansive walking trails, so guests can explore the natural beauty winding down to the river.

As Ferri looks back, he is grateful and still a little incredulous about how it all came together.

"Because of all the issues and

delays, this project probably should never have happened," he said. "There was also a bidding war on this property because it wasn't expensive. They had a lot of offers. I wrote a letter to the head of the Christian Brothers and asked them to give us a chance to get all our ducks in a row to purchase this property. The stars aligned, and we were able to do it."

"We put everything on the line to get this open to the public, and then COVID happened. We got hit with one thing after another. We were told to give up and move on, but we kept pushing. Today, it's a beautiful, magical property producing world-class spirits and world-class food."

"I think a lot of people have dreams and aspirations, and sadly, many never come true. You get busy with life," Ferri added. "This honestly is the most incredible dream you could ever wish for come true. We had some very dark days. We all went through hell and have found our heaven with this beautiful property."

The Hudson House & Distillery, 1835 U.S. Route 9W in West Park, can be reached at (845) 834-6007 or [thehudsonhousesny.com](http://thehudsonhousesny.com).



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# Stone Dock Golf Course 'Worth The Drive'

## Offering Spectacular Views, New Cafe

Stone Dock Golf Course in High Falls has a new attraction besides its picturesque fairway views—a new café featuring locally sourced food after the round is over.

The new owners are Francis and Jennifer O'Donnell, who bought the 9-hole course in 2021 during the pandemic. In the winter of 2023, the couple embarked on a full renovation of the café, including changing to a more modern bar layout, upgraded lighting, new furnishings and fixtures and increased kitchen space.

"We brightened the space significantly," Jennifer O'Donnell said. "It's a labor of love for us. We're a mom-and-pop business. We have no outside investors, and we work around the clock. We love this place and Francis has really nursed the course back to health."

In keeping with the Chamber's "Buy Local" philosophy, the O'Donnells are buying food for the café from farms in the non-profit Rondout Valley Growers Association and others in the region. The couple met at one of the group's dances.

"We're working with mostly local food purveyors to the extent possible," O'Donnell said. "The goal is to put food on the table from farms as close to us as possible. When I say we're committed to local and local food, I mean it in a way that's sort of homegrown."

For example, hamburgers are the menu's most popular item, and the meat comes from a farm two hours north. The menu, described by O'Donnell as "upscale casual," features sandwiches and other comfort food. O'Donnell said many local groups now want to hold events at the café.

The word among local golfers is that the course itself, one of the more scenic in Ulster County, is looking plush this summer. O'Donnell, an urban and environmental planner by trade, credited her husband, who studied horticulture and was the course superintendent from 2004 to 2011, with nurturing the grounds.

O'Donnell said she and Francis have tried to wean off pesticides and make the course more sustainable, including using compost extract for fertilizer and local organic manure.

Golfers will also notice 320 more trees, planted by the state Department of Environmental Conservation (DEC) under the Trees for Tribes program. The

O'Donnells also added charging stations for electric cars.

"This isn't branding," O'Donnell said. "This is real. We're committed to sustainability and environmental conservation."

"It's a beautiful place. It's a hometown course. A lot of people consider this the place where they grew up and learned to play golf. We're seeing them return after word has gotten out that the greens have really improved."

Stone Dock has seen the number of golf leagues jump from four to six. The course boasts two par-5 holes, five par-4s and two par-3s. The layout is long and a bit tricky sometimes.

"It's a challenging and fun course," O'Donnell said. "Beginners can learn here, but experts really enjoy it, too."

The course is surrounded by fields and woods and about a mile of the course gives linksters a view of the Rondout Creek. The tower at the Mohonk Mountain House is

visible as you play the 6<sup>th</sup> and 7<sup>th</sup> holes.

"We have an incredible amount of wildlife here and we use minimal chemicals on the course," O'Donnell said. "We have every kind of animal you could imagine, including bear, deer, foxes and a lot of beautiful birds, a lot of migrating fowl and turtles, you name it; they don't bother our golfers. This place is really a haven. We consider this almost a wildlife sanctuary."

O'Donnell said she strongly supports the Chamber and called Jess Davis, the Chamber's Director of Membership, a "true friend" and "an amazing resource" for her business.

"It's just been an overall very supportive experience to work with the Chamber," she said.

Davis and Ulster County Tourism Director Lisa Berger



attended the course's Ribbon Cutting last year and Davis was at the café's inaugural brunch and shared shots on social media. O'Donnell said Stone Dock would love to host one of the Chamber's networking Mixers someday.

"We're excited to host one," she said. "We want to welcome Chamber members to see the course with a 10 percent introductory discount on their food when they pay us a visit. Stone Dock is a home away from home. It's worth the drive."

Stone Dock Golf Course and Café, located at 12 Stone Dock Road in High Falls, can be reached at (845) 687-7107 or [www.stonedockgolfcourse.com](http://www.stonedockgolfcourse.com).

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October 26, 2023

5:30 pm Cocktails | 6:30 pm Dinner & Awards  
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Tickets \$125 per person | [www.UlsterChamber.org](http://www.UlsterChamber.org)

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Wednesday September 13 | 12 noon - 5:00 pm

#### Buy Local Expo

Diamond Mills Hotel & Conference Center  
25 S. Partition Street | Saugerties, NY

Presenting Sponsor: Naccarato Insurance  
Principal Sponsor: Timely Signs

Tuesday September 26 | 7:30 - 9:00 am

#### Chamber Breakfast Meeting

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More Info and Registration [UlsterChamber.org](http://UlsterChamber.org)  
Questions (845) 338-5100

### ChamberNews

The official publication of the Ulster County Regional Chamber of Commerce is a special advertising section to the Daily Freeman, PO Box 4470, Kingston, NY 12402 - A Media News Group publication

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## Rising Up Deliciously!

### Hole In The Wall Donuts Pleases Palates

It's 4:30 a.m. in Kingston, and Brandy Walters is already up and at 'em. Once again, it's time to make the doughnuts (minus the drudgery expressed by Fred the Baker in the popular 1980s Dunkin' ad).

Walters, the owner of Hole in the Wall Donuts, instead finds complete joy in rolling, shaping, frying and frosting the little nuggets that have become all the rage since they were introduced during the pandemic—proof that something delicious can emerge from something so dark and dismal.

"I love to bake," said Walters, who once ran The Anchor at 744 Broadway in Kingston, out of which the doughnut idea arose. "My grandfather had a candy store called Sweet Treats in New Jersey, just outside of Philly. He sold these funnel cakes, and during the summer, I would help him make them. It all stems from that."

Walters has successfully transitioned her doughnut operation from the kitchen at The Anchor to the Cornell Creative Business Center at 139 Cornell St. in Midtown Kingston, which has artisan food production workspaces. She and a team of seven, including two full-time employees from The Anchor, are excited about their new digs at the business incubator run by The Arc Mid-Hudson.

"It's a commercial kitchen, so we'll be making them the way we did at The Anchor, but now, it will all be in one place. At The Anchor, it wasn't always conducive to productivity, so here, we'll be able to do it in one room, and that will be nice," Walters said.

She now sells exclusively at area farmers' markets from Kingston to Phoenicia. She also has appeared at local events such as the Rosendale Street Festival, the Mayfest at Walkway

Over the Hudson and as a pop-up here and there, but no matter where Walters goes, her doughnut sales are off the charts.

She features old-fashioned sour-cream doughnuts and everything from classic glazed and sprinkled confections to fantasy creations like her popular crème brûlée doughnuts and churro-inspired doughnuts stuffed with dulce de leche cream and tossed in cinnamon sugar.

Customers can't get enough of her Earl Grey blueberry doughnuts with tea rose petals or her chocolate-covered cherry devil's food cake doughnut topped with black cherry glaze. Other sensations include her moist-yet-chewy mochi doughnuts, which are plant-based and gluten-free, and her sumptuous pistachio cardamom doughnut, which Walters created from scratch.

She started off by searching online for ways to make sour-cream doughnuts and found 65 recipes. From there, she narrowed it down, experimented and added her own whimsical touches, finding winning combinations, while having fun in the process.

"It always brings me joy when people like them and when they order them for special events," she said. "I think the best thing is watching people's eyes light up when they see them. Doughnuts are such a happy thing."

The idea popped into her mind in 2021 when road projects in Midtown Kingston were at full throttle, which she said, affected business at The Anchor. At the time, COVID was still a thing, so she sold her products out of a window at the business. That's how she came up with the Hole in the Wall moniker.

"We had big gates in front of our building while work was underway, so I had to come up with a way to keep our doors open and pay my staff. Since I loved to bake, I thought to myself, 'Why not doughnuts?'"

Her hunch proved to be spot-on. Early on after Walters rolled out the doughnuts, the line of customers often stretched around the block, even as the road crews were working. As word got out and more photos of Walters' creations kept showing up all over social media, she knew she had struck a chord with

customers, who were hungry for something new and playful. Besides, she was ready for a big change that took her outside The Anchor.

"The late nights there just weren't suiting me anymore. I have been living a healthier lifestyle now, and I like being out in the sun and enjoying fresh air and farmers' markets. I get to be a part of this great community of food providers. It feels better and suits me better at this point in my life," she said.

"I have loved seeing the way this community has grown creatively. That's why I love it here so much. We're not afraid to change and grow. The pandemic affected so many individuals, and you can take these situations and become bitter and angry, or you can grow and evolve. Kingston has found new ways to make it work. We show up for each other, and that means everything."

For more information on Hole in the Wall Donuts, go to [holeinthewallkingston.com](http://holeinthewallkingston.com).



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- Donna Moss Greeting Cards
- Downtown Cafe
- Dutch Ale House
- Earl B. Feiden Appliance
- Everett Motors
- First Capital Poke Bar
- Freer Abstract, Inc.
- Gadaletto's Seafood, Inc
- George Kackos
- Grease Monkey #1180
- GTM Payroll Services
- HOP Energy/KoscoHeritage
- Hudson Valley Magazine
- Hurley Excavation & Landscaping, Inc.
- Independent Financial Services
- JK & SONS FUEL OIL, INC.
- JK's Wine & Liquor
- Johnny-on-the-Spot Disposal Service, Inc.
- Jolly Cow
- Junior League of Kingston, NY Inc.
- Kingston City School District
- Medical Associates of the Hudson Valley, PC
- MGI Construction + Consulting LLC
- Miron Wine & Spirits
- New Horizons Resources
- Numrich Gun Parts Corp.
- Peak Trading Corp.
- Perry's Service Station
- Plaza Pizza
- Safeco Alarm Systems, Inc.
- Sav-On Party Central
- Staples
- StoneRidge Electrical Service, Inc.
- SUNY New Paltz
- Tasca Chrysler, Jeep, Dodge, Ram, Fiat of Kingston
- The Original Mickey's Igloo
- The Twaalfskill Club
- Town of Esopus
- Ulster County District Attorney
- Ulster Strong
- Ulster YouthBuild, LLC
- Village Apothecary - Woodstock
- Violet's Bakery
- Wild Earth Wilderness School
- Woodstock Golf Club, Inc.
- Yum Yum Noodle Bar - Woodstock
- Zena Recreation Park

Ulster County Regional Chamber of Commerce



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 Monday, August 7, 2023 | 5:30pm  
 Holiday Inn Express - Kingston | 1835 Ulster Ave., Lake Katrine, NY  
 Trip itinerary and details will be provided  
 No charge to attend but reservations are required.

Questions? Contact Carol Ricken | Email: [Carol@ulsterchamber.org](mailto:Carol@ulsterchamber.org) | Cell: (845) 417-7143

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For Information/Application Contact  
 Ingrid Kulick  
 845.338.5100 x6  
[Ingrid@UlsterChamber.org](mailto:Ingrid@UlsterChamber.org)  
[www.UlsterChamberFoundation.org](http://www.UlsterChamberFoundation.org)

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