

ANOTHER RESURGING FAVORITE

Cool-Again Catskills

Put this New York getaway back on your dance card

BY TERRI MARSHALL

THE CATSKILLS EXPERIENCED its golden era in the mid-20th century as hundreds of swanky resorts sprang up across the idyllic landscape, one that famously inspired the movie *Dirty Dancing*. But as travel trends changed in the 1970s, its popularity waned, leaving resorts shuttered and once-glittering environs trapped in a time warp of weathered barns and dilapidated bungalows. Not anymore — the region's making a comeback, attracting visitors from across the country. Optimism permeates the towns and villages as previously empty storefronts evolve into art galleries, fashionable boutiques, and restaurants. Performing arts venues now attract Broadway-caliber shows as new resorts and inns welcome travelers back. Here, we home in on two of the Catskills' four counties to share some of the recent developments driving this resurgence. Now's the ideal time to visit, with the always-impressive fall foliage color blast the added draw.

In Greene County

See: Built in a repurposed lumberyard in the Village of Catskill, the **Lumberyard Center for Film and Performing Arts** opened for its initial season last autumn. Providing a place for performing artists to perfect their work as they prepare for premieres in New York City, Lumberyard's summer offerings included

new dance-theater works by Tony-nominated director Rachel Chavkin and renowned choreographer Bill T. Jones. Fall programming, still being finalized at press time, focuses on



Dance performance at the Lumberyard Center

ROBERT BENSON (JACOBS PILLOW), ALON KOPPEL (DANCER)

other creative arts, including an interactive installation addressing ecological issues affecting the Hudson River. Keeping community service at its core, this nonprofit facility gives back to the village through programs such as Fresh Start, which provides incarcerated teenagers a map to the future through performing arts. 212-587-3003; lumberyard.org

Do: With an extensive network of trails, the Catskills has long been a hikers' paradise. A springtime grooming prepared well-worn trails to accommodate the influx of hikers joining the Catskills craze. Don't miss New York's tallest cascading waterfall, **Kaaterskill Falls**, now easier to view. From the Laurel House's parking lot off County Route 18, take the Yellow Trail to a platform that was added in fall 2017. **→** Spanning the Hudson River alongside the Rip Van Winkle Bridge and beyond, the \$11 million **Hudson River Skywalk** pedestrian path connects the historic homes of pioneer landscape artists Frederic Church and Thomas Cole, the latter of whom founded the Hudson River School of Art. Take in the 360-degree unobstructed views along the path, which just opened in May, and you'll know what inspired the artists' landscape masterpieces. hudsonriverskywalk.org

Eat: Catskills native Natasha Witka reopened **New York Restaurant** on Main Street in the Village of Catskill in 2015 and renovated the space early this year. Drawing inspiration from her Polish roots (and her grandmother's recipes), Witka developed a menu that varies from traditional Polish cuisine to modern American cooking. Taste the flavor of Poland with a bite of Golabki, cabbage rolls stuffed with ground pork and rice, and top it off with a fruit tart (above). With live music and inventive cuisine, the restaurant has quickly become a favorite of residents and visitors. 518-943-5500; nyrestaurantcatskill.com

→ Local favorite **Circle W General Store & Café** opened a new location on Main Street in the Village of Catskill in April. Serving breakfast and lunch, the café offers daily soup and sandwich



specials to a hungry downtown crowd and visitors lucky enough to discover this gem. 518-943-5840; circlewmarket.com

Maggie's Krooked Café & Juice Bar

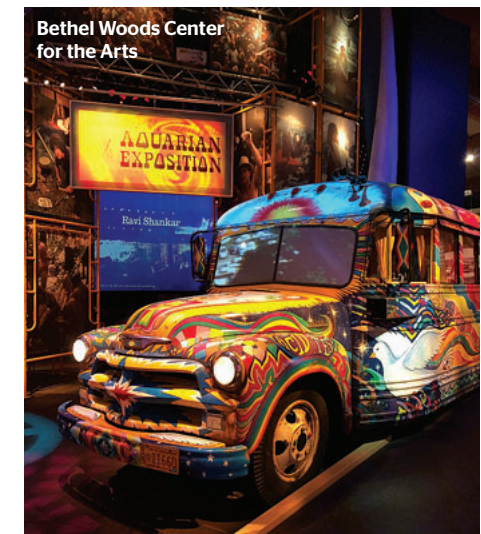


→ Maggie's Krooked Café & Juice Bar, a colorful cozy spot in the center of the mountaintop village of Tannersville, is a region staple. Maggie's loyal customer base keeps coming back not just for her creative twist on comfort food such as Let's Vegetate — a traditional grilled cheese sandwich stuffed with sauteed veggies — but also her welcoming spirit. 518-589-6101; maggieskrookedcafe.com

Stay: Significantly contributing to the Catskills' comeback are new and renovated resorts and inns. Among the newest: the **Eastwind Hotel & Bar**, which opened in summer 2018. A year-round boutique hotel perched on a hilltop in Windham, the property consists of 16 well-appointed rooms as well as three preassembled Scandinavian-designed Lushna cabins for a taste of camping without having to rough it. From \$250. 518-734-0553; eastwindny.com

In Sullivan Catskills

See: Despite its name, Woodstock actually happened in a field in Bethel Woods when about 450,000 people gathered here for the 1969 music festival that changed a generation's course. The **Bethel Woods Center for the Arts** celebrates the peace, love, and music of Woodstock with its psychedelic 1960s museum. During the festival, more than 20 booths with vendors selling crafts and clothing comprised Binda Bazaar, an area that also connected two major sections of festival grounds. Bringing to life this element of festival history, Bethel Woods re-created the wooded area in May. 866-781-2922; bethelwoodscenter.org



Do: Feel the need for speed? The exclusive **Monticello Motor Club** in the village of Monticello presents the thrill of high-performance driving with its "Taste of the Track" experience. The package includes time in a BMW M Performance vehicle on a 4.1-mile racing track, a Polaris RZR XP Turbo on a 300-acre off-road course, and a go-kart on a 0.6-mile track. Up the speed ante with the newest experience — a three-day all-inclusive BMW M2 Racing School (\$8,900) with professional instructors and interactive classroom sessions. 855-662-2582; monticellomotorclub.com

Drink, Eat: Located on glimmering Kauneonga Lake, less than 4 miles from Bethel Woods Center for the Arts, the **Local Table and Tap** offers a delicious selection of entrees, an extensive craft beer selection, and a bartender who knows his way around a cocktail. This year, the eatery also features a special drink menu dedicated to Woodstock's anniversary with selections such as the Flower Power Fizz, made from elderflower, Empress gin, and lemon. All this comes with a side of mesmerizing views too good to miss. 845-583-3020; thelocaltableandtap.com

Stay: Seeking to bring his brand of personalized wellness based on the ancient India practices of Ayurveda, naturopathy, and yoga to the U.S., Indian billionaire and philanthropist Subhash Chandra chose the Catskills for his 131-room **YO1 Wellness Center**, which opened last year. YO1 offers guests an immersive, authentic experience focused on achieving lasting wellness. The resort's menu of services includes yoga and meditation classes, massage, and acupuncture. Individually designed culinary programs feature foods that strengthen the immune system and detoxify the body. From \$599. 855-256-8851; yo1.com

→ Just outside the hamlet of Livingston Manor along Willowemoc Creek, the birthplace of American fly-fishing, the 14-room **DeBruce hotel** provides an ideal place to rest and rejuvenate. Formerly a boardinghouse, the resort completed 30-plus miles of private hiking trails in summer that wind through the property. Renovations in 2017 updated this 1880s charmer to include a beautifully designed glass-walled dining room. Be sure to reserve seating for Chef Akseil Theilkuhl's nine-course seasonally changing tasting menu. From \$429. 845-439-3900; thedebruce.com