

MILLBROOK TIME THE RIGHT COURSE

*New Money Chases Old In
The Hot Weekend Retreat*

BY AIMEE LEE BALL

*Adult Education '92, From Space
Art to Feminism to Dinosaurs*

BY MARILYN WEBB

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NEW YORK



AMY FISHER

RUNNING WILD

Joey Buttafuoco Was Perfect, Thought **Amy Fisher, 17,** Except for One Thing. He Was Married. Then Amy's Gun Went Off, Leaving Joey's Wife Crippled for Life. And so the Nightmare of Every Suburban Parent Unfolds

By **Jeanie Kasindorf**



MARY JO AND JOEY BUTTAFUOCO





GERALD IMBER'S
ESTATE NEAR
MILLBROOK.

Millbrook's



Moment

THE RICH AND FAMOUS
DISCOVER THE PLEASURES OF
THE HUNT-AND-POLO SET

BY AIMEE LEE BALL



Mary Tyler Moore and her husband, Robert Levine, recently watched as a newborn, a male with pure white hair and blue eyes, drew his first breath. Levine, who is a cardiologist, even helped in the delivery. Mother and son are doing fine and living in a stable at Greenawn, Moore and Levine's 30-acre spread in Millbrook, New York. The new baby is a foal, an American Creme albino. 🏠 Millbrook is no Amagansett. But for a growing contingent of weary New Yorkers

PHOTOGRAPHED BY
TED HARDIN

GERALD IMBER (FAR RIGHT) PLAYING POLO AT THE MASHOMACK PRESERVE CLUB.



looking for weekend respite, the ones who've been in Bedford and Bellport, who've howled their last expletive at the Long Island Expressway, Millbrook is becoming the new Hamptons—what might be called North Hampton. Just 85 miles up the Taconic, it's about halfway between the Hudson River and the Connecticut border.

Many of the newcomers share equestrian interests with the established "hill-toppers"—descendants of the landed gentry who pioneered the area to re-create European hunting preserves. Millbrook is slightly frumpy and seriously horsey: There are hunt scenes on half the mailboxes, and it is not unusual, while you await your tuna melt at the village diner, to glance out the window and see a twelve-horse trailer heading down the main street.

Other folks are seduced by the landscape, the rolling hills and green pastures where you can wake up to see a dozen deer making a breakfast of your lawn. Hiding out in those hills are weekend fugitives from New York politics (City Council President Andrew Stein, Attorney General Robert Abrams) and publishing (Simon & Schuster editor-in-chief Michael Korda), from Italian fashion (Massimo Ferragamo, Nicola Bulgari) and French cooking (restaurateurs Michel and Patricia Jean, who

own Provence), plus the occasional rock star (Daryl Hall) and plenty of swells. Henry Kravis and Carlyne Roehm, who have a place in nearby Sharon, Connecticut, bought a huge piece of land here not long ago, and Robert and Blaine Trump have just bought a grand house.

"This is a very famous road," says a shopkeeper providing directions. "You got Sweet 'n Low, you got Band-Aids, and you got Hanes panty hose." Translation: "Sweet 'n Low" is Donald Tober, chairman of Sugar Foods Corporation, and his wife, Barbara, the editor of *Bride's & Your New Home* magazine, who own Yellowframe Farm and are planning a B.Y.O.H. ("bring your own horse") party this summer. "Band-Aids" is Libet Johnson, who

has red flags in her yard for landing aircraft. ("I was at a party there once when several neighbors arrived in a helicopter," says one woman. "They just came across the field instead of getting in their car.") "Hanes panty hose" is Mrs. John Hanes, an elderly woman whose husband's family founded the hosiery company.

Millbrook is not your average enclave of the rich and famous. There is no Benetton or Barefoot Contessa in town, no Sapore di Mare or Henry Lehr. The Millbrook Department Store sells Lollipop underwear and horsey dish towels, and The Fox and the Hare Beauty Salon still teases hair for the Hunt Ball. "It's kind of refreshing to come in and see a consignment shop," says real-estate agent Leigh Ponvert. "Used clothing? In Millbrook? It's wonderful."

There's one food market and one deli—not an Eli's baguette or a bag of Terra Chips in sight—and Jamo's, the local ice-cream parlor, doesn't carry Coffee Heath Bar Crunch. "You get vanilla and chocolate and strawberry with chocolate sauce, and you can probably even get butterscotch," says John Dyson, scion of one of the town's wealthiest families, who was involved in the "I Love New York" campaign when he was commerce commissioner and started the Millbrook Vineyards when he needed a hobby

MILLBROOK'S MOMENT

"WE HAVE A certain lifestyle here, we like it, and we fight fiercely to protect it," says John Dyson, a longtime resident.

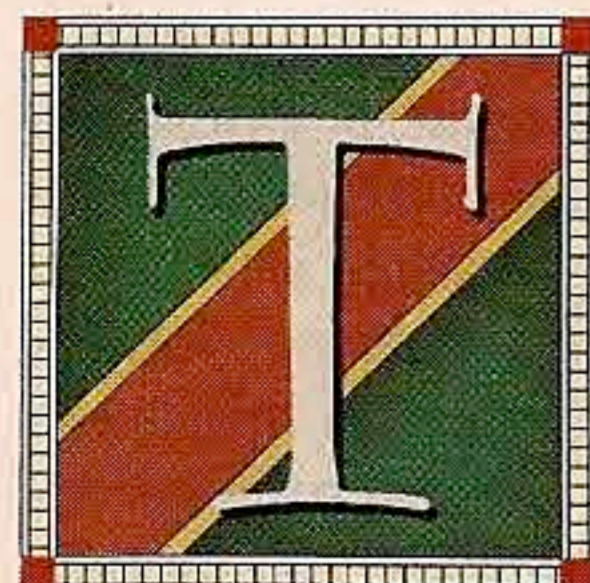


DOWNTOWN MILLBROOK—NOT A PLACE FOR PEOPLE WHO ARE GLITZY," SAYS JOHN DYSON.



as a break from government. "You want all that other stuff? Go somewhere else.

"We have a certain life-style here, we like it, and we fight fiercely to protect it," Dyson continues. "At the Golf & Tennis Club, they're always talking about improving and fixing and making it not nine holes but eighteen, and we say, 'If you want to be a member of Piping Rock or Winged Foot, go back to Long Island or Westchester, 'cause this ain't it.' This is not a town for people who are glitzy. Periodically, we get people who buy a house and are not really suited, or the community is not suited to them. People come to me and say, 'What are we going to do about these new people? They're not the sort of people we want around here.' And I always say, 'Don't worry about it—Millbrook will bore them to death, and they'll go back to Southampton, where they belong.'"



THE VILLAGE OF MILLBROOK is actually in the town of Washington, although what one local denizen calls the "aura of Millbrook" is tacitly extended beyond the postal limits (and the coveted 677 telephone prefix). "Because of the contour of the land, a lot of the hilltops stretch over from the town of Washington into Pine Plains or Unionvale or Dover," says village historian David Greenwood. "But the gravitational pull is

still to Millbrook." The Millbrook Equestrian Center is actually in Stanford; there is an eight-by-ten glossy of Mary Tyler Moore at the diner in Pleasant Valley; and Frank Stella, who lives in Amenia, is considered an honorary resident of Millbrook.

Millbrook was named for an estate that belonged to George Hunter Brown, a nineteenth-century gentleman farmer, and had a mill overlooking a brook. When Brown began to promote the idea of a cross-county railroad that would go through the center of Dutchess County, a speculator named Franklin Merritt bought a large tract and laid out plans for the village, indulging in the vanity of two main streets (still) named Franklin and Merritt. "The businesses in the outer hamlets gravitated toward the train," explains Greenwood, "so virtually overnight—bing—a new community was established."

There were legendary estates around the turn of the century. Daheim, with its nine greenhouses, man-made lake, and bowling alley housed in a Swiss chalet, was "the home" (the name's German meaning) of Charles Francis Dieterich, a founder of what is now Union Carbide. In the sixties, after the property had become part of the Hitchcock estate, it was turned over to Timothy Leary for a "colony" devoted to the sacramental use of LSD. "During Leary's use of the house, there were peace signs spray-painted on the front," says Greenwood. "People recall seeing sheep on the roof, and there are still rocks in the woods with some strange

drawings." When Leary and his followers went skinny-dipping in the lake, the police would sneak in with headlights turned off to make arrests—led by the D.A. of Dutchess County, one G. Gordon Liddy.

The robber barons imported Italian stonemasons and gardeners to work on their estates, and the Victorian houses in the center of Millbrook still constitute a Little Italy. "It's a window on America here," says John Dyson. "Millbrook was founded by very rich people, but now it's run mainly by children of Italian immigrants."

Dyson's father, financier Charles Dyson, is a member of a later generation of rich people who bought into rural grandeur. He owns Spring Hill Farm and a house called Mandalay that is used just for parties. Although *Forbes* estimates his worth at several hundred million dollars, Charles Dyson's thriftiness is legendary. "There is a very large bathroom at Mandalay," says a former housekeeper, "and it's all done in black: a black bath, a black shower unit, and a black toilet. When the toilet wasn't working properly, Mr. Dyson wanted to put a white one in there because the black was too expensive."

Millbrook real-estate values went steadily up until the stock-market crash of 1987, from which they're still recovering. Robert V. Lindsay, retired president of Morgan Guaranty and brother of former mayor John Lindsay, paid about \$130,000 for a Colonial in 1978 and added land in 1987 for around \$92,500. Outgoing Yale president Benno Schmidt and other members of

the Schmidt family bought 88 acres in 1982 for approximately \$750,000. Franklin Delano Roosevelt Jr. paid about \$450,000 in 1985 for a house with a pond and added 25 acres the next year.

But longtime resident Peter Wing may have the best view, high on the rockiest part of a farm started when his Quaker grandfather left the family homestead after being shunned by the local congregation for marrying an Irish Catholic. "It would be like marrying a Martian today," he says. One day when Wing was a boy, he was working with the calves, and, he says, "a neighbor asked if I knew what I was doing. Later, I was watching *Million Dollar Movie* and said, 'That's the guy in the barn!'" The neighbor was Jimmy Cagney.

Wing, a self-described "screwball," took a corner of his family's farm and built a castle out of rock, stone, and wood gathered from the area. The foundation is made from railroad trestles and pieces of old city sidewalks, the bathtub is a cast-iron planter, the sink tiles were chipped from antique plates, and the living room is set up with mannequins in Civil War ball gowns and Persian armor. Wing's antique cars and farm machines have been rented for movies such as *Zelig* and the upcoming *Malcolm X*. Tours of the castle are available for \$5 (\$3 for children). "Cagney stopped in here before he passed away," says Wing. "I'm sorry I didn't have him go over to a wall and write his name in Magic Marker."

The provenance of one's house is a matter of status. "I believe our house dates from the very end of the eighteenth century," says Charles E. Pierce Jr., director of New York's Pierpont Morgan Library, "but I have conceded that it may have been built in 1801." But many of the fabled old estates have been torn down or split up, and the homes of the new Millbrook elite are often converted carriage houses, gardeners' cottages, and restored farmhouses.

The house Blaine and Robert Trump recently bought had been moved from the town of Hudson. It has old floors, high ceilings, long Victorian windows, and fireplaces, so it has the feeling of an old house, but the furnaces and framework are new. "It's a very special house," says Blaine. "My husband's been looking in the area for quite a while. He fell in love with it, and so did I. For us, it's kind of an escape from New York. It's very, very quiet up there. There's no one around, and there's one stoplight in town, and that's about it."

That may change. "Millbrook has definitely been discovered," says real-estate broker Robert Ferris. "Stockbrokers, investment bankers, attorneys are still where a great deal of our clients are coming from. They feel they're not going to come here

and find suburbia crashing in on them.

"The hardest thing to find in Millbrook," Ferris goes on, "is what everybody is looking for: a pretty Colonial house set down a long lane, the way you picture in a Grandma Moses painting. There's a good nineteenth-century center-hall Colonial home on about 35 acres for \$500,000. But it won't be on that perfect country lane. That perfect country lane is very difficult to come by."



LEISURE-TIME ACTIVITIES in Millbrook don't center on the literary cocktail party. There is clay-target shooting at the Tamarack Preserve and polo at the funky Mashomack Preserve Club, founded on Shelter Island and relocated to Millbrook about twelve years ago. Some people drive antique carriages around on dirt roads, and some go "bea-

MILLBROOK'S MOMENT

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gling" with the Sandanona Hare Hounds: A pack of bassets and beagles sets off in search of a hare, and the people chase the dogs. Afterward, someone will often have a tea, perhaps with a touch of sherry.

"I had a friend who was a real Greenwich Wasp," says real-estate agent Heather Schorr King, who bought the art studio on the old Sandanona estate (which was built by John Wing, whose family lent its name to the town of Wingdale). "When he first heard about beagling, he said, 'Soooo reassuring.' Like, there will always be an England. I think that's what goes on here: People play at being English eccentrics. The fox hunting and the carriage driving and the terrier trials with Jack Russells—anybody who's anybody has those dogs.

"Everybody comes up here and blows out all their hostilities," says King. "I think it's therapeutic for most of Wall Street who join Mashomack. Instead of killing one another, they shoot at clay pigeons or something. You can get into the role of country squire up here. What

amazes me is that more people haven't gotten hurt, because they come up here so charged up, and a lot of people who are riding are not schooled the way they should be before they get out there on the horses."

Unless Farnham Collins has anything to do with it, that is. "If somebody who has never hunted before wants to hunt here, we usually invite them to come 'roading' a day or two," says Collins, co-master of the Millbrook Hunt with Mrs. Oakleigh Thorne (her husband's great-grandfather was one of the hunt's first masters). "Roading is when the hounds are exercised in the spring, walking on the roads," he explains. "A lot of people come to fox hunting late in life, and it can be very rewarding, but you want to be sure they are sufficiently humble as they come to it. You also want somebody who's compatible with a group of people. It is essentially a private club, and you want people who fit in."

By long-standing Millbrook tradition, neighbors ask to borrow not a cup of sugar but a couple of acres: Even non-horsey newcomers are asked to grant permission for the hunt to ride across their property.

If you do fall off your horse, there are two well-known plastic surgeons in the neighborhood: Howard Bellin lives in a house on the Sandanona estate, and Gerald Imber has a 1790 farmhouse and a barn with a stream running through it, where the milk was kept cold. "I always had a house in the Hamptons, and I wanted to have a farm," Imber says. Now he's trying to figure out why he has holes in his aru-

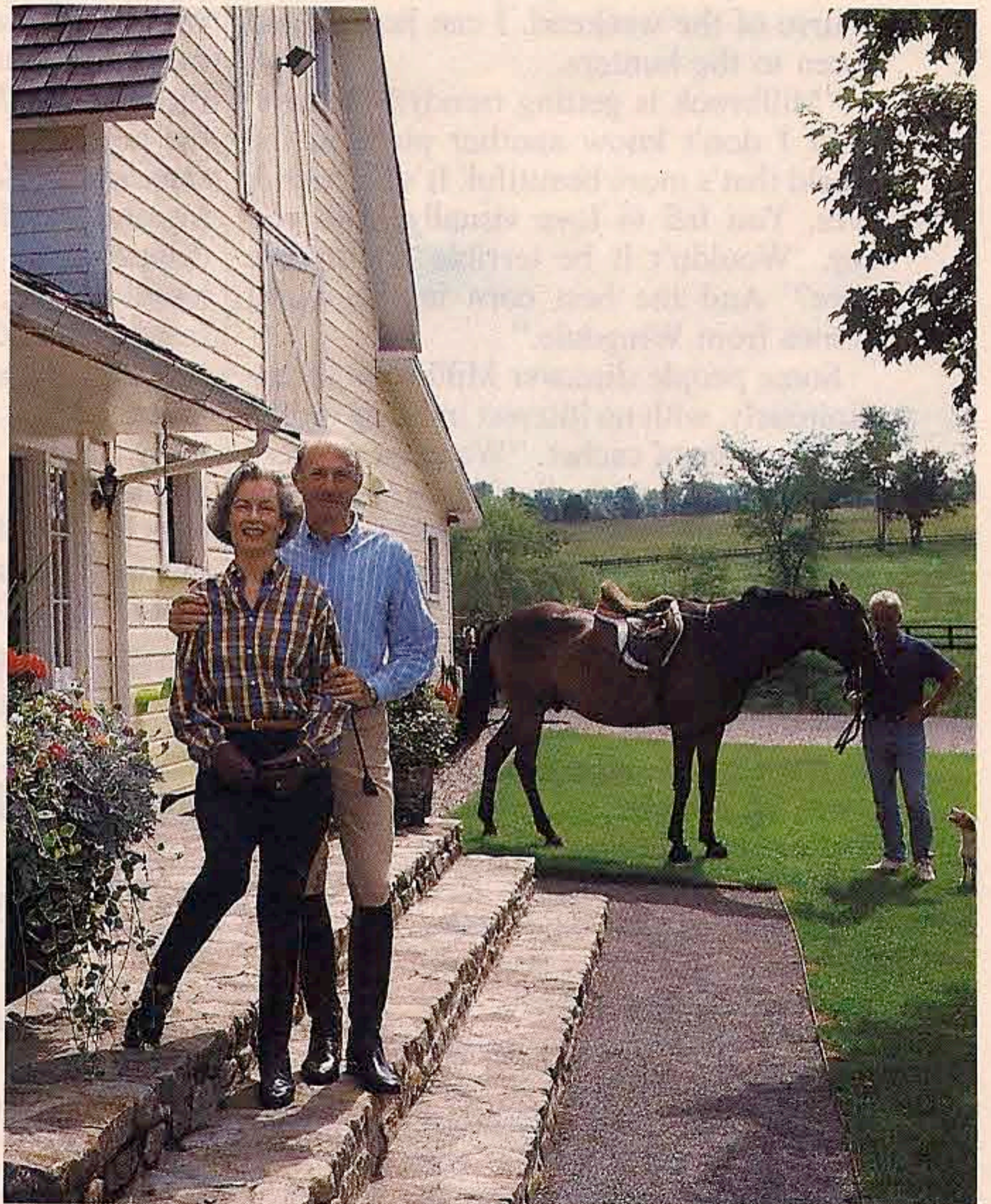
gula crop, some of which might be served for dinner along with game he shot at Mashomack, where there is no shame in blood sport.

"It's interesting," says Imber. "I was brought up in an intellectual, bookish family, very citified. Guns were just unheard of. But up here, shotgun sports are delightful pursuits, and some form of bird shooting or hunting will always take place." Imber loves the reverse snobbery and whimsy of Mashomack, with its hand-painted wallpaper showing a European artist's idea of American colonial life: Indians dressed as if they'd come from Delhi, and blacks and whites wearing similarly elaborate Victorian garb, as if they were one big happy family. "It's genuinely eccentric—a down-at-the-heels old house, and you walk in through the kitchen," he says. "It's quite bizarre, everything that the tartered-up restaurants of New York aren't."

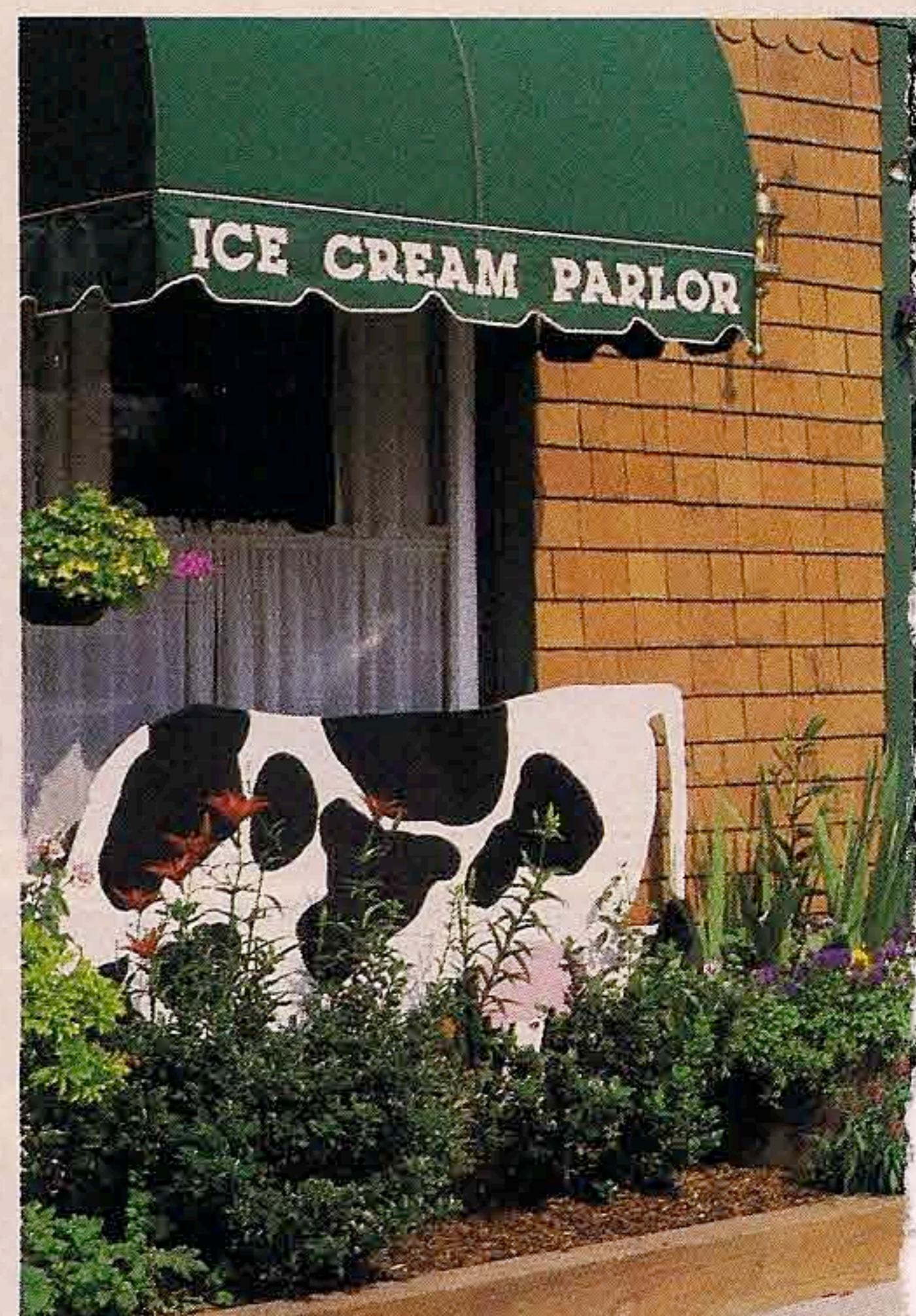
In the Hamptons, Imber had been close to advertising maestro Jerry Della Femina and his wife, former newscaster Judy



ABOVE: FARNHAM COLLINS AND MEMBERS OF THE MILLBROOK HUNT STAFF EXERCISE THE HOUNDS. RIGHT: "YOU HAVE TO LIKE SIMPLE THINGS," SAYS MASSIMO FERRAGAMO.



LEFT: MARY TYLER MOORE WITH HER AMERICAN CREME ALBINO, JOHN. ABOVE: BARBARA AND DONALD TOBER AT YELLOWFRAME FARM.



THE FARMER'S MARKET IS A SATURDAY ATTRACTION.

AT JAMO'S ICE-CREAM PARLOR, THE BASIC

Licht, and persuaded them to keep him company in Dutchess County. "The appeal is to get lost, to disappear," says Della Femina, who bought the 136-acre Tymor Farm, next to the Clove Valley Rod and Hunt Club, in 1987. "I'm not going to run into 50, 75, 100 people I know in the course of the weekend. I can just sit and listen to the hunters.

"Millbrook is getting trendy," he says, "but I don't know another place in the world that's more beautiful. It's Currier & Ives. You fall in love visually. And you say, 'Wouldn't it be terrible not to live here?' And the best corn in the world comes from Wingdale."

Some people discover Millbrook serendipitously, with no interest in being on the cutting edge of cachet. "We came up here because of an ad in the *Times*," says Judith Rossner, who wrote *Looking for Mr. Goodbar*. She and her companion, Stanley Leff, bought a 100-year-old house a year ago. "We didn't know the whole business about this horsey, Waspy town—the stuff we got teased about later. I was on a horse once when I was eleven years old, and I've never been on one since."

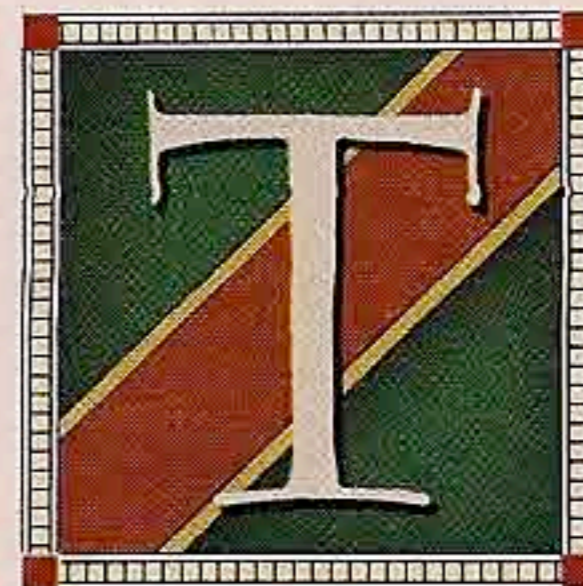
Rossner gardens and cooks, and since she was a co-chairwoman of Westpride, the community group that fought the plan for Trump City, she will probably not be attending the same parties as the Trumps. "In my early years in Sag and East Hampton, people would say, 'God, how can you stand the social stuff?'" she says. "I worked alone all day. I

was delighted to see people every night. But the social stuff wears. If I have any problem with the area, it's how far it is to a good movie."

The movie house, and the hotbed of Saturday-night activity, is a 418-seat "triple" in the old grange hall in Millerton, where Tim Zagat rents a nineteenth-century farmhouse. "We think Millbrook is the past, and Millerton is the Millbrook of the present," says Zagat. "We're all very separatist." Zagat, who publishes the dining and travel guides that bear his name, drives up to Rhinebeck when he wants haute cuisine. "But most of us are sort of restauranted out by the time we go to the country," he says. "This is one of the few places where, when you get away, you get away from it all, and you're not into the whole New York-orbit stuff. The Hamptons is just like moving the East Side out to the beach, and all you're doing is sitting in traffic on the Long Island Ex-

pressway. All the way up here is pretty."

With the current influx of new money, can \$18-per-pound chicken salad be far behind? "There may end up being that kind of stuff," says Zagat. "I've noticed that parties are getting more and more fancy. I went to a cocktail party in blue jeans and found people in tuxedos one summer night. But the predominant taste in life, at least for the present, is for simplicity."

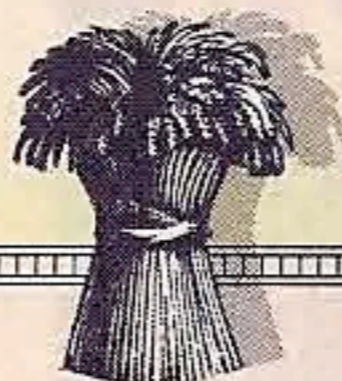


THE ITALIANS SEEM TO look at Millbrook and see Tuscany, the English see the Cotswolds, and the French see Burgun-

dy. "We were in the Hamptons for two summers," says Provence co-owner Patricia Jean, "and Michel kept saying, 'I want cow hills—*montagnes de vache*.' I ride, and I got tired of riding around in a circle. One day, we were driving along the Taconic, and Michel said, 'This is what I'm looking for.'" The couple bought an 1850 Greek Revival farmhouse and have considered opening a Millbrook restaurant for the area's wealthy residents, who don't have much of a local selection. Sunday brunch is available at Alyn's, in the old Methodist church in Lithgow. The village has the China Chinese restaurant and the Millbrook Town House (Lions Club meetings on Wednesday nights), and

MILLBROOK'S MOMENT

HAMILTON Meserve says that Millbrook reminds him of the "small town" of his youth: Beverly Hills in the forties.





FLAVORS ARE BIG.

Copperfield's on Route 44 serves French dip. "I bet you haven't seen one of those on the menu for a long time," says Patricia Jean.

"People always say, 'Let me know if you want to do something—we need a good restaurant up here.' We've tossed it around, but we had a restaurant in the south of France in a little village where everybody took a vacation, and we thought they really needed a good restaurant. But they didn't, because they stayed home and cooked, and I feel that's the way with Millbrook."

"Restaurant? How do you spell that?" jokes Massimo Ferragamo. "The most common thing is teamwork in the kitchen. You have to like simple things." Some hill-toppers may still be wary of newcomers like Ferragamo, but he insists that Millbrook can accommodate both his vintage European cars and the horse-drawn carriages that some locals still drive. "If someone could be disturbing to the community, those are fears that really don't materialize. They could be there, and the place is so big that you wouldn't know."

"This is a real closed community," says jewelry designer Barry Kieselstein-Cord, who bought Fox Gate after being introduced to the area by designer Cathy Hardwick. "Even for the people who live in this town, it's closed—they have their privacy. If you show a commitment to the pursuits of the community, if you are an attractive person—which means that you are an intelligent and caring person—I think perhaps you will be absorbed over a period of time."

"I have discouraged a lot of people from coming up here," Kieselstein-Cord says, "and the few that have slipped

through usually came up and rented and said, 'I don't get it,' and left in a year. A few of them were foolish enough to buy, and these are people who will never really be accepted, because their interests do not run parallel to the community."

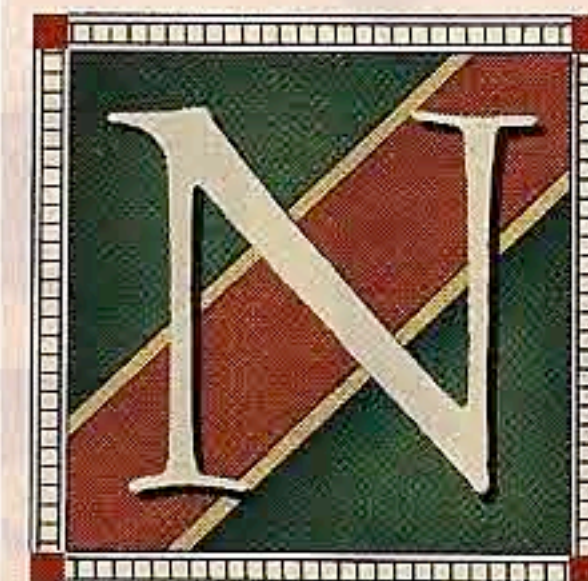
One who has had no problem fitting in is Hamilton Meserve. After a career in international banking, he became the publisher of the *Millbrook Round Table* when he decided that he, too, wanted to wake up on a farm. "The day I was cleaning out my desk at Citibank, the broker called and said, 'I've got your cows,'" Meserve recalls. He says Millbrook reminds him of the "small town" of his youth: Beverly Hills in the forties. (His mother was Margaret Hamilton, the Wicked Witch of the West.) One day, after he had written an editorial about the hostages in Tehran, he was asked by the composing room to fill a few extra inches, so he urged readers to buy Girl Scout cookies. "The next day," Meserve says, "I'm walking down the street, and a guy comes up and says, 'That was a great piece you did.' And I said, 'Well, I've been to Tehran,' and he said, 'No, no, the Girl Scout cookies.'"

Living in a small town means walking down the main street and waving to your neighbors but also respecting their privacy, even (perhaps especially) if your neighbor is Mary Tyler Moore. "I will go so far as to see that the T-shirt I'm wearing is an appropriate color for the shorts or the jeans," says Moore, "and that's about the extent of my nod to fashion up here. We don't do cocktail parties, and we don't ride to hounds, and we don't go beagling. I fell off an English saddle and broke six ribs, and that's why we ride Western, so we're not close to anybody up here."

"I like getting my hands into the earth, and I am now covered with a case of poison ivy, but that's part of the price you pay for really being in the country." Moore's property even includes a tree house—the kind with a ladder you pull up after you—that was built for the children of previous owners. Communing with nature is so good for the soul that, she says, "I am almost talking to the trees. I can get so angry at the thought of development. In New York, we are these Democratic liberals who, once we get to Millbrook, suddenly become very Republican and say, 'No, no, no, don't come near us with af-

fordable housing. Let us be constantly in the shade of a great old walnut tree, and don't change that stream, and leave that pond alone.'"

Moore is one of the few people who know how to answer the question "Where do you get wet?" "There are probably three pools in Millbrook," says Kieselstein-Cord. "You could stand under a garden hose, or you jump in your pond, which is what I do." His desire for the beach has paled, he says, "because there's so much more going on here. Fall is gorgeous, and in the winter, we can ski on the trails, and then it's the mud season, and if you're lucky enough to have a swamp on your property, you can watch skunk cabbage and ferns pop up their heads."



NOT EVERYBODY GOES in for swamp watching, which may explain why Andrew Stein's house is back on the market and Jerry Della Femina is

giving up Wingdale corn to open a restaurant in East Hampton. "Millbrook was an enclave of the rich before any of the nouveaux riches found out about it," says Barbara Milo Ohrbach, who bought a carriage house with her husband, Mel, of the Ohrbach's-department-store family, and transplanted their *Cherchez* shop from Lexington Avenue to the old Millbrook post office. "I think some people will come up for one season or one day or maybe one hour and find it's not all they



THE MILLBROOK DINER, A LOCAL LANDMARK, BY NIGHT.

thought it was going to be, and some people will stay for a lifetime. You don't see Mary Tyler Moore sitting in the delicatessen. People buy a big piece of property so they can stay home. You want excitement? Go to Poughkeepsie."

Tickets are still available for the August production of *The Sound of Music* by the local theater group, and you may find yourself sitting next to Blaine and Robert. Just don't expect to see Mary Tyler Moore. She'll be in her tree house.