

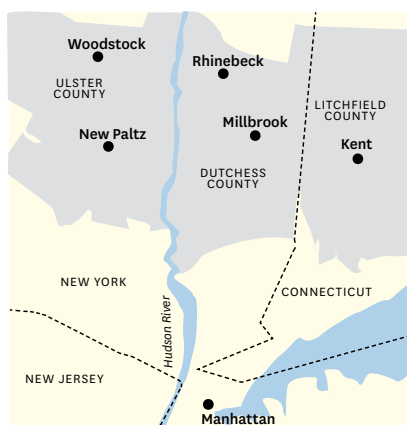
\$1.1M

Built more than two centuries ago, this four-bedroom Woodstock farmhouse, listed with Bean, sits on 17 acres.

WHERE BOWIE, BOND & BIG NAMES WEEKEND (QUIETLY)

The Hamptons-avoidant instead head north from NYC to Woodstock, where 200-year-old houses, huge parcels and a laid-back vibe make it anything but Hollywood on the Hudson By Leslie Van Buskirk

IN THE AREA SURROUNDING Woodstock, N.Y., you still can spot groovy waifs with long, silky hair, leather sandals and flowing skirts, but these days it's more likely to be **Mary-Kate** and **Ashley Olsen**, who recently rented a summer place there, than a relic from the flower-child era. Not that all of the freethinkers who came looking for a peaceful place to call home have left — they're still there; they're just gray-haired homeowners now.



In recent years, this part of Ulster County has become a powerful magnet for writers, producers, directors and all manner of famous faces looking to drop off the radar. Yes, that is 007, aka **Daniel Craig**, in the market, doing his shopping and hitting the gym with the missus, **Rachel Weisz**. The actress paid \$2.1 million cash for a 1785 stone house on 124 acres in the nearby hamlet of Marbletown in 2008. Last summer, two days after giving birth to her third child (and first with fiancé **Arpad Busson**), longtime Woodstock habitué **Uma Thurman** was waiting patiently for her elixir at the juice bar **Press + Blend Organic** (29 Tinker St.), swaddled babe in arms.

The elegant man quietly lunching alone who looks like **David Bowie** actually is the reclusive rock god. He bought a three-bedroom '70s modernist house on 50 acres (also for \$2.1 million cash) with wife **Iman** in nearby Shokan in 2012.

The hamlet, population 1,000, also is where 29-year-old Facebook co-founder and *The New Republic* publisher/editor in chief



Weisz

Chris Hughes (net worth: at least \$600 million) and husband **Sean Eldridge**, a potential congressional candidate, purchased a \$2 million modern house overlooking the reservoir in January. Oscar winner **Melissa Leo**, **Aidan Quinn**, **Vera Farmiga**, **Willem Dafoe**, *Julie & Julia* writer **Julie Powell** and *Date Night* director **Shawn Levy** also own houses in or around this region of the Catskill Mountains.

What has brought such an influx to the quiet, somewhat rural community? "It's a combination of two things," says Coldwell Banker Realtor **Eric Bean**, who has squired his share of actors to house viewings. "It's only two hours from Manhattan, but you can get a country experience. And the people who live here are celebrity-savvy — they'll say hello, but give them



The dining room has its own fireplace, one of four in the house.

space and leave them alone."

Veteran music manager **Peter Himberger** of Impact Artist Management (clients include the Gipsy Kings) admits he has met more industry people in Woodstock than he did living in Manhattan. "Artists, musicians, writers — everybody's coming to Ulster County. I grew up here and traveled around the world to many beautiful places, but I came back because I've never seen a place as beautiful as the Hudson Valley."

Nestled under the impressive Overlook Mountain, the town was a creative epicenter long before 1969's Woodstock Music Festival (which actually took place about an hour away in Bethel). Lured by its natural beauty, artists flocked to the area during the mid-1800s, and the legendary arts-and-crafts colony **Byrdcliffe** (34 Tinker St.), where celebrities from **Isadora Duncan** to **Bob Dylan** have lived, opened in 1901 and remains a vibrant part of the landscape. In

L.A. ad exec Patrick O'Neill, creative director at TBWA\Chiat\Day\LA, recently sold this modern 3,250-square-foot, three-bedroom house in Woodstock for \$1.95 million.



\$1.95M

in addition to October's Woodstock Film Festival (which attracts such A-listers as **Daniel Day-Lewis**) and the upcoming Writers Festival (April 18 to 21), **Maverick Concert Hall** (120 Maverick Road) holds a summer music series. For the spiritually minded, there are retreats at **Karma Triyana Dharmachakra** (335 Meads Mountain Road), a Tibetan Buddhist monastery associated with Uma's father, scholar **Robert Thurman**.

Downtown Woodstock's shops mostly are of the handmade-pottery-art and tie-dyed-clothing variety, but foodies gravitate to high-end eateries **Cucina** (109 Mill Hill Road) for farm-to-table Italian and **Le Canard Enchaîné** (276 Fair St.) in nearby Kingston for authentic French. More casual is **Oriole9** (17 Tinker St.), a green-certified bistro beloved for its French toast and Vietnamese coffee.

Compared with Martha's Vineyard and the Hamptons, residential real estate prices aren't



sky-high, though there's not a lot of turnover. In March, the average listing price for Woodstock was \$597,587, with a square-foot average of \$148. The median sales price was \$175,000 (October to December 2012), up 40 percent compared with a year earlier, according to Trulia.

Producer James Hollond (*P.S. I Love You*) recently listed his rambling 1925 Greek Revival, with pool, guesthouse and studio on 8.5 acres, for \$1.1 million. Not that he's leaving town — he's relocating to another property. In nearby West Hurley, a restored 1918 five-bedroom house with 6.7 acres and views of the Ashokan Reservoir is on the market for \$1.15 million. It was the childhood home of



Hathaway

Chevy Chase, who visited throughout his *Saturday Night Live* years. The highest-priced property now is a 26-acre compound with an indoor pool, tennis court and screening room for \$7.9 million, but a majority are less than \$1 million and many more than 100 years old. And those are just the public listings; properties often change hands without hitting the market, another sign of the privacy that permeates the area and makes it a good choice for low-key glitterati.

"Everyone from artists to rock stars live here, but no one's chasing them down the street," says part-time resident **Barry Wacksman**, executive vp digital at advertising agency R/GA. "I'd spent time in other places before coming to Woodstock, but it's so beautiful here, with skiing in winter and hiking in the summer. You won't be surrounded by Wall Streeters like in the Hamptons."

In contrast to that crowded summer playground, the Woodstock area is spread out, with lots of acreage and woods dividing homesteads. That has helped draw an influx of big names to look at property during recent months: **Hugh Jackman**, his *Les Mis* co-star **Anne Hathaway** (seen at Dunkin' Donuts on one visit), **Liv Tyler** (who grew up in the area), **Lady Gaga**, the **Clintons** (who've moved their search from Rhinebeck, N.Y., to the other side of the Hudson) and paparazzi bait **Jennifer Aniston** and **Justin Theroux**.

The prime luxury spot to stay while house-hunting is the renowned **Mohonk Mountain House** (rooms from \$276 a night, 1000 Mountain Rest Road), located in a 100-plus-year-old Victorian castle in nearby New Paltz.

Not that everyone is famous or wealthy. Says Westwood Metes & Bounds real estate broker **Sharon Breslau**, "There are four contingents of people: the ones who've lived here forever and have streets named after them, the ones who have been here less than 30 years, the weekenders and the people who don't realize the concert is over!"

Adds Woodstock Film Festival executive director **Meira Blaustein**: "It's not about glitz and glamour, and that's not going to change. I mean, it's Woodstock, you know? We're not worried about becoming Hollywood on the Hudson." **VHR**



\$1.1M

Built for silent-film star Irene Lves in 1925 and now owned by Hollond, this four-bedroom Woodstock estate, dubbed Butterfly Hill, sits on 8.5 acres and is listed with Breslau.

The State of the Northeast's Blue-Chip Second-Home Market

LITCHFIELD COUNTY, CONN.
MEDIAN LIST PRICE DECEMBER 2012: \$289K, NO CHANGE YEAR-OVER-YEAR



Carter Road, Kent, Conn., \$7.9M

This four-bedroom estate on 100 acres, owned by Democratic power broker **Vincent Roberti**, is listed by **Ira Goldspiel** of Sotheby's International Realty. Other homeowners in the area include **Oscar de la Renta** and **Henry Kissinger**.

DUTCHESS COUNTY, N.Y.
MEDIAN LIST PRICE: \$260K, DOWN 6.8 PERCENT



Shunpike, Millbrook, N.Y., \$17.5M

Houlihan Lawrence's **Adam Hade** has listed the 8,200-square-foot estate of NYC socialite **Blaine Trump** in the horsey enclave; nearby Rhinebeck was the site of **Chelsea Clinton's** 2010 wedding.

MARTHA'S VINEYARD
MEDIAN LIST PRICE: \$679K, UP 31 PERCENT



Passamaquoddy Avenue, Martha's Vineyard, \$3.95M

Director **Peter Farrelly** has his three-bedroom waterfront property listed with **Bill Rossi** of Sotheby's International Realty.

SOUTHAMPTON
MEDIAN LIST PRICE: \$1.3M, DOWN 3.7 PERCENT



First Neck Lane, Southampton, N.Y. \$18.25M

Pat Petrillo of Sotheby's has the listing on this 10-bedroom estate. The median list price in nearby East Hampton was \$2.5 million in December 2012, down 22 percent from a year earlier. — **BRANDON KIRBY**

Source: Zillow