

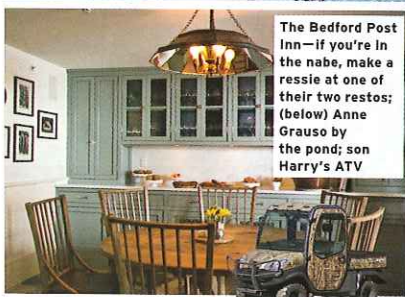
MILLBROOK, NEW YORK



Fashion-scene fixture and Vera Wang VP **Mario Grauso** ducks out of the diva whirl to serene, horsey Dutchess County—as should you!



Tyrrel Lake at the public Innisfree Garden



The Bedford Post Inn—if you're in the nabe, make a ressie at one of their two restos; (below) Anne Grauso by the pond; son Harry's ATV



The Grausos' 250-year-old farmhouse

REVOLUTIONARY SLEEP

Our 1780s farmhouse is called Frog Pond because one of our ponds is filled with them. We have tons of guests, so my wife, Anne, puts spillover up at the low-key, charming Porter House Bed & Breakfast. About half an hour away, Richard Gere and his wife, Carey Lowell, have opened the high-luxe, lovingly restored Bedford Post Inn. (If you want your own place here, social fixture Susan Perry at Houlihan Lawrence is the go-to agent.) *Porter House Bed & Breakfast*, porterhousebandb.com, 845-677-3057; *Bedford Post Inn*, bedfordpostinn.com, 914-234-7800



ESCAPE FROM NEW YORK CITY

About seven years ago, we fled the Hamptons beach scene for upstate New York horse country as a weekend retreat—I needed to veg out. Though it's recently become more of a scene here, too, the houses are so spread out that you avoid the impromptu drop-by. An hour away from the city, we're surrounded by lakes, ponds, and marshes; there's unbelievable solitude and quiet (except when our teenage son, Harry, and his friends race around on Kubota ATVs). Our property abuts the stunning 150-acre Innisfree botanical gardens, open to the public in spring; it combines native plants and rocks with Chinese landscaping principles. *Innisfree*, innisfreegarden.org, 845-677-8000

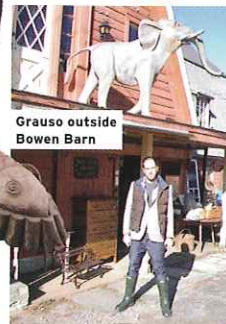
COUNTRY LIFE

Riding horses is a major pastime. Winley Farm, where Harry and Anne ride English on Holsteiners, has public clinics. The other fun diversion is shooting. We take visitors to shoot clays at Sandanona shooting grounds (I got the requisite Barbour vest at the pro shop). Private members who take the country thing very seriously go wing shooting with dogs here. *Winley Farm*, winleyfarm.com, 845-677-3124; *Sandanona*, orvis.com/sandanona, 845-677-9701

Son Harry, riding at Winley Farm



The redcoats are coming! A local rider



Grauso outside Bowen Barn

An alpaca scarf and T-shirt from NL-GB; Grauso's Barbour vest; pudding molds from Red School House antiques

SLOW SHOPPING

One of the local pleasures is browsing the personality-driven stores. Anne likes the well-curated eighteenth- and nineteenth-century country-manor finds at the Red School House antiques store, while I prefer to sift through the jumble at Bowen Barn. We always stop by decorator Selina van der Geest's luscious housewares shop, NL-GB (she did our neighbor Frédéric Fekkai's house), and Reardon Briggs, a classic hardware store, where we sourced the ATVs. *Red School House*, redschoollhouseantiques.com, 845-677-9786; *Bowen Barn*, 845-868-7085; *NL-GB*, nlgb.com/store, 845-868-7130; *Reardon Briggs*, reardonbriggs.com, 845-677-3100

GRAZING

We have an enormous kitchen that everyone else uses but us—we're a disaster. We recruit guests who can cook, or we go to an awesome, true American diner for floats and grilled cheeses. Babbette's—fresh, local, and great—caters our parties. Anne loves the bistro Cafe Les Baux and the delicious and eco-conscious Red Devon (all their meat is raised nearby); there's also surprisingly decent Mexican at La Puerta Azul. *Millbrook Diner*, 845-677-5319; *Babbette's*, babbetteskitchen.com, 845-677-8602; *Cafe Les Baux*, cafelesbaux.com, 845-677-8166; *Red Devon*, reddevonrestaurant.com, 845-868-3175; *La Puerta Azul*, lapuertazul.com, 845-677-2985



Babbette's on Franklin, the village's main street; en famille at the Millbrook Diner



Innisfree Garden: Getty Images; Bedford Post Inn: Michael Weschler; Babbette's: Tara Wing/Tarawingphotography.com; molds: Janet Skinner/Ashley Studios; all still lifes: Len Lagrou; remaining images: courtesy of subject