

# Aim High! Pitch Big!

## Buy Local Expo Spotlights Your Business

As a businessperson, there's nothing like having a captive audience for four hours straight. That's the way that Katy Dwyer, the President and Founder of the Kingston-based KDD Marketing, sees the annual Buy Local Expo, Ulster County's largest networking event of the year.

"The Buy Local Expo gives businesses the opportunity to really showcase their services to a room full of people who are already interested in buying local and eager to build local relationships," she said. "It's a great way to stay top-of-mind for other local businesses, and it shows that your business is also invested in local and community as well, by simply showing up."

The Chamber's premier Buy Local Expo is happening at Diamond Mills Hotel and Conference Center at 25 South Partition St. in Saugerties on Sept. 10 from noon to 4 p.m. Naccarato Insurance will once again be the Presenting Sponsor, and Timely Signs, the Principal Sponsor. The event is free and open to the public.

Nearly 100 area businesses and organizations typically participate with attention-grabbing and interactive booths that feature demonstrations, elaborate props and costumes, all the requisite giveaways plus hundreds of door prizes.

The event also generates buzz as all sectors of the business community come together to display their goods and services to the multitudes that pass through. Dwyer, who has participated for many years (including as a booth judge), described it as a fun and collaborative experience.

"The Ulster Chamber's Expo is truly unique," she said. "I've attended other expos in other counties and with other networking



groups, and they never live up to the Ulster Chamber's Expo. Somehow, this expo draws in the right crowd. The attendees are there looking for services, businesses and to network locally.

"Businesses are there to have fun, show themselves off and meet new people. It doesn't feel overly 'salesy,' and businesses go all out with their booths. You'll find all sorts of prizes, activities and fun giveaways, too."

Courtney Malsatzki, Director of Operations at the Phoenicia Diner, added that the atmosphere is warm and inviting—something she attributes to the staff of the Ulster County Regional Chamber of Commerce.

"I cannot count the number of times I have bragged about our local Chamber of Commerce," she said. "The Buy Local Expo (and many other events) are shining examples of how much we all value our community and all the people and businesses that it takes to keep it going strong. I have never left an Expo without a new friend."

This will be the Phoenicia Diner's third year hosting a booth,

and Malsatzki said it's so worth the cost and effort to get noticed.

"It is a true local gathering. Not only are you able to showcase what you do best to an enormous gathering of local community members, but you're also able to meet and network with peers in the local business community and forge future relationships with them," she said.

On top of being a lead generator, the Buy Local Expo is also a good place to catch up with fellow business owners and share information, according to Wanda Grinder of Servpro Kingston New Paltz.

"The Ulster Chamber Buy Local is an incredible opportunity to connect with local businesses and build relationships that last a lifetime," she wrote in a testimonial. "Every year, we set up our booths alongside other vendors, creating an environment where networking is natural and business growth happens organically. The connections I have made at this event have not only led to new opportunities but have also strengthened my presence in the community. It is more than just an event. It's an investment in long term success."

That's precisely the goal of the Buy Local Expo, according to Chamber President Ward Todd.

"The Chamber is all about bringing our members together and connecting them with other businesses, business leaders and the general public," he said. "This event, which attracts people from throughout the Hudson Valley, makes those valuable connections possible."

"We thrive as a local business community if we all remember to shop local, keep it local and buy local. Everyone is invited to attend the Buy Local Expo and help keep our economy going strong."

There's still time to participate—whether as an exhibitor or sponsor. The cost for a booth is \$395 for Chamber members. For non-Chamber members, the fee is \$495.

Premier booth sponsorships are \$1,495; Platinum booth sponsorships, \$995; and Diamond booth sponsorships, \$595.

**For more information, contact Allison Costanzo at [Allison@UlsterChamber.org](mailto:Allison@UlsterChamber.org) or go to [ulsterchamber.org/buy-local-expo/](http://ulsterchamber.org/buy-local-expo/).**

# Sip, Swirl, Savor & Socialize!

## Don't Miss Hudson Valley Wine & Food Festival

*"The discovery of a good wine is increasingly better for mankind than the discovery of a new star."*

So said Leonardo da Vinci in the Middle Ages, and his famous words still ring true today.

Fast forward to the first weekend after Labor Day 2025 to see for yourself. On Sept. 6-7, thousands are expected to pass through the gates at the Dutchess County Fairgrounds in Rhinebeck in search of fruity, zesty, palate-lingering wines from all over New York state.

With hundreds of wines being featured at this annual event produced by Wineracks.com, they're likely to hit the jackpot and enjoy the pour profoundly.

And it's not just wineries that will be offering tastings. Attendees will also get to sample beverages from the state's many cideries and distilleries, along with gourmet specialties from some of the region's best restaurants.

"We know how to throw a good party," said festival founder Michael Babcock, President of Wineracks.com. "It's one of the unique events in New York and the Northeast in general, where you have such a wide range of wineries, distilleries and breweries represented and a plethora of food trucks, artisans and

specialty food people.

"Plus, there's great entertainment all day long as well as food demos with some new chefs and some of our locally famous chefs like Marcus Guiliano and Ric Orlando. On top of that, there will be wine seminars throughout the day. The Dutchess County Fairgrounds is one of the preeminent venues around, and it's a fun, low-key, enjoyable afternoon."

Babcock conceived of the festival 24 years ago after attending the Food and Wine Classic in Aspen, Colo. in May 2001.

"When we came back from that event, I said, 'Man, that was really good. We need to see if we can start one on the East Coast,' so I went over to my buddy, Norm Greig, and we committed to doing it for five years at his Red Hook farm."

"I had been involved in the Finger Lakes Wine Festival, so I got to know a lot of the wineries at that time. They had been frozen out of the New York City market, so when I announced that I was going to do this, the vast majority of the participants were Finger Lake wineries. What it did was open up the market to them, and as the festival expanded and more wineries became established here, it became a good vehicle for their exposure."

The event initially spotlighted wineries exclusively. According to Babcock, there were few regional craft brewers and distillers in the early days, but as they grew in number and popularity, he opened the doors to them as well.

"We're seeing an influx of RTD (ready to drink) brands and a number of New York-based operations popping up, and we're willing to support them," he added.

At this year's event, close to 30 wineries will be represented, along with 19 distilleries, including Tuthilltown Spirits and Hudson House and Distillery: 16 breweries and five cideries and meaderies.

Close to 20 food trucks—what Babcock calls "gourmet food on wheels"—will also be on hand selling empanadas, crab cakes, meatballs, doughnuts, mac and cheese fried balls and Thai specialties.



In addition, gourmet creations like cheeses, oils and vinegars, hot sauces and breads will be for sale at the event as well as artisan products like jewelry, essential oils, candles and handbags.

"People show up and stock up for the year," said festival coordinator Terrah Bretherton. "It's like a one-stop shop. The festival is a celebration of the end of summer and it's a place to gather with your family and friends while supporting small businesses in the area."

The Hudson Valley Wine and Food Festival has become so popular over the years that it's gotten national notice. Last year, it was ranked third in a USA Today readers' poll, and it was once again in the running for the top spot in 2025.

Tickets at the gate are \$50 per person, which includes a souvenir glass and free samples from the wine, beer, cider and spirits vendors, and \$35 in advance. VIP tickets (with extra perks) are \$99 at the gate and \$75 if purchased in advance. Special group rates are also available.

**The Hudson Valley Wine and Food Festival will be held at the Dutchess County Fair Grounds in Rhinebeck, NY. For more information visit [hudsonvalleywinefest.com](http://hudsonvalleywinefest.com)**



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# A Delicious Community Hub In Accord

## Amish-like Feel At Saunderskill Farm Market

Right about now, the produce bins at the Saunderskill Farm Market are brimming with summer's bounty, especially those gorgeous ears of sweet corn and deep-red, pulpy tomatoes.

Grab a cart and fill it with the fresh-from-the-earth fruits and vegetables grown at this 12-generation family farm at 5100 U.S. Route 209 in Accord. Make sure to save space for homemade jams, peach pie, and maybe a dozen apple-cider doughnuts made in-house at the store bakery.

Before you leave, take a walk to the nearby greenhouse to gather some zinnias or other seasonal plants to beautify your living space.

Dan Schoonmaker, who runs Saunderskill Farms with his brother, David, daughter, Jennifer Shea, and her husband, Ryan Shea, said the market has become a hub for locals and recent transplants from metropolitan New York to not only enjoy the Amish-like vibe but also pick up breakfast and coffee or a fresh bouquet from the greenhouse.

"We built the market in 1998, and it's expanded over time," he said. "There were a lot of factors. First, there was the disaster in the city at the World Trade Center in 2001, and when the pandemic hit, we saw another wave of people move up here. They've relocated to the area and now work remotely. That's one of the many things that have helped us grow."

Saunderskill, named for the tributary of the Rondout Creek that flows through it, is one of America's oldest farms. Originally granted to Lt. Hendrick J. Schoonmaker by Peter Stuyvesant in 1663 as payment for military service, the family's original 300 acres of prime Rondout bottomland has

been continuously farmed since 1680. It is one of the few in the nation to have received the rare Tricentennial Award from the U.S. Department of Agriculture.

Long before Schoonmaker and his brother came on board in 1980, the family grew vegetables and raised chickens and cows. Schoonmaker's great-grandfather sold produce, eggs and milk mainly to Sullivan County's Borscht-Belt resorts, bungalow colonies and boarding homes for D&H Canal workers.

"They went with a truck to deliver to all the little stores and hotels in Sullivan County," Schoonmaker said. "My grandfather also delivered milk, eggs and vegetables to Mohonk Mountain House throughout the summer. That lasted through the 1950s. People used to come here from the city because it was cooler in the mountains, but then things changed with air travel."

The Schoonmakers then got into the wholesale business, shipping sweet corn and other vegetables to chain stores like A&P. By the early '70s, they shifted to roadside markets and began selling produce in Bergen County, N.J.

"But those farms were phasing out. They didn't continue to the next generation," Schoonmaker said. "At one time, we had 35 customers in Bergen County. Now we have two. That's what led us to build the farm market. We knew we had to do something else to support our family."

These days, the family pours its heart and soul into the farm market. Schoonmaker's daughter and son-in-law manage it with the help of their daughters, Elouise, Claudia and Lauren. Schoonmaker's younger daughter,



Renee, has a full-time job at the New York Farm Bureau, but when she isn't networking with other farmers, she also helps when needed.

The store not only carries produce grown by the family but local, artisan edibles and a country-inspired gift section. The bakery, which Schoonmaker credits to his late wife, Cathy, is the most popular corner.

"When we first opened the market, we didn't have the bakery. My wife was instrumental in putting things together. She grew up in a house where she would come home from school every day to freshly made bread and cookies, and she wanted to offer that to our customers."

His oldest daughter, Jennifer, also went to the culinary program at Sullivan Community College. Her baking team, consisting of five women, makes the pies, muffins, scones, doughnuts and cookies from scratch and uses the best quality ingredients for the freshest products, Schoonmaker added.

Saunderskill Farms also offers pick-your-

own strawberries in June, blueberries in July and early August and apples and pumpkins in the fall.

Aside from a corn maze in the fall and the antique tractor pull it hosts every October, Saunderskill steers clear of the entertainment elements offered at other area farms, and that's intentional.

"Our philosophy has always been to take care of and grow our customer base without getting into the bouncy houses. When you bring in busloads of people, your loyal customers do not receive the attention and service they deserve," he said.

That personal, family touch is part of what makes Saunderskill so special. Even Schoonmaker's father, Jack, who turns 92 in August, is still involved at the farm, and his daughter, Renee, nephew, Ryan, and grandchildren are already showing interest in keeping it going.

"The main thing is we all enjoy what we do. It's a way of life for my family, and it's nice to see the next generation's enthusiasm. It's also very rewarding to connect with our customer base and offer them a quality product. It's a nice relationship," he said.

*Saunderskill Farms, located at 5100 Route 209 in Accord, can be reached at (845) 626-2676 or saunderskill.com.*

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