

Going up to Catskill country

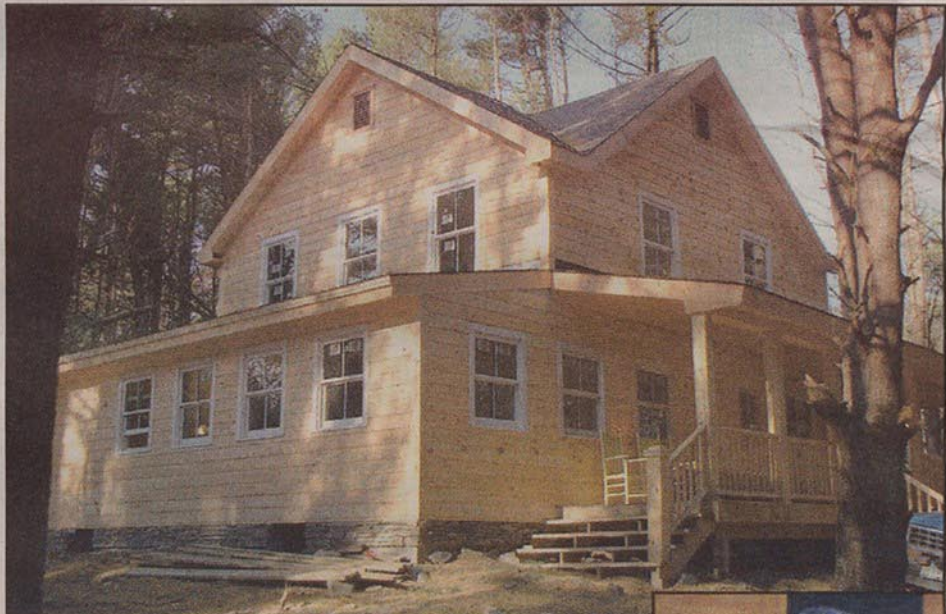
Ole' style houses amidst woodlands and one-horse-towns

A smile mixed with a sense of relief breaks across Oscar Cragwell's face when he thinks of the summers spent in the Hamptons as a well-behaved guest enjoying his friends' sun-filled vacation homes. Now a home-owner of two months, Cragwell says he's delighted with his new-found independence.

But Cragwell, a banker in his mid-30s, didn't purchase his home in the city or in Long Island.

"I make a good salary, yet I couldn't possibly afford an apartment in the city," said Cragwell, who estimated he'd have to raise \$150,000 in cash to meet the 20% down payment and upfront mortgage payments typically required of most co-op boards.

Instead, he headed nearly two hours northwest to Sullivan County in the Catskills where he bought a 2,500 square foot, newly ren-



A 2000 Sq. ft, 3-BR farmhouse in Sullivan County that recently sold for \$350,000. Developer Charles Petersheim is pictured at right.

ovated 4-BR farm house with mountain views and 2 acres of woodlands for a fraction of what a one-bedroom apartment would have cost him in Manhattan.

The developer, Charles Petersheim, a former New York City resident specializing in farmhouse construction, says Sullivan County is ideal for first-time home owners such as Cragwell because of its affordability and prox-

imity to the city.

imity to the city. "I came up with the idea to replicate the old 100-year-old farmhouses, giving the weekenders a home that feels like the old thing, looks like the old thing, but works and does not necessitate a complicated relationship with plumbers, electricians, roofers and assorted others who 'save' the day for 'unsuspecting house buyers,'" Petersheim said.

So taking the concept of the old American farmhouse, Petersheim went to work buying land and lining up financial backing. His company, Catskill Farms, now three years old, just sold its third house and is developing land for five more.

Petersheim's farmhouses have the look and feel of old country-style living — wrap-around porches, vintage cast-



iron radiators, cathedral ceilings, wide plank wood floors and antique pewter interior doors — but with all the modern amenities and conveniences that new construction affords. Petersheim uses imperfect materials and old-fashioned carpentry techniques to create the lived-in feel that gives farmhouses their charm and emotional appeal. To make the ceilings similar to what's overhead in an old home, Petersheim uses rough-hewn boards with knotted holes. Instead of having oak handrails that have been just milled to the most perfect degree, Petersheim's carpenters employ their own instruments to create a textured feel. "The farmhouse is America. It's the wide open prairie with the lonely house and wraparound porch — but in our case with higher ceilings and better electric." EM

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Prices from \$200,000 for 2-acres of wooded land, up to \$400,000 for a 6-acre lakefront property.

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