

TRADITIONAL AMERICAN FARMHOUSE CAPTURES NEW FLAVOR

Story by Lori Rubinstein-Fleck, Director of Communications, Sullivan County Partnership

Chuck Petersheim is more than owner and operator of two successful companies, Catskill Farms and Bluestone Construction. He is, simply put, an artist who takes the traditional American farmhouse and creates custom pieces of art so that no one home is a replica of the other.

"We take our favorite architecture in Sullivan County and infuse it with modern amenities, especially with regard to space, lighting and windows. Then, we build it and sell it. We pass these little gems onto someone else to enjoy while adding value to Sullivan County," stated Petersheim.

While this may 'sound' simple, it is not. Chuck Petersheim literally went from working as a house painter in Lancaster, Pennsylvania, to working in commercial construction management in New York City, to living in a 400 square foot shack with no running water or electricity. He bet it all on Sullivan County. And, his risks have certainly paid off.

"New York City construction is a brutal sport. It's very hard to get pleasure out of it. In Sullivan County, construction is differ-

ent. Once you have a good team in place, you can, hopefully, enjoy the process," said Petersheim.

Petersheim grew up in a family of five in Lancaster, Pennsylvania. He graduated from the University of Pittsburgh in 1992 with a degree in economics and history. From there, he decided it was time to see a part of the world that was completely different from that which he was accustomed. Thus, India, Nepal, Greece and Germany became the destinations at \$10 per day in student hostels.

"Traveling enabled me to see things more broadly; it broadened my horizons and taught me just how lucky I was to live in the U.S.," explained Petersheim.

After 911, the construction industry took a nose dive in New York City and he and his dog, Bella, headed to the hills and moved to Cohecton. With very little money in his pocket, but with a stellar credit history, Petersheim discovered The First National Bank of Jeffersonville, a critical player in the birth and growth of his business. "Jeff Bank and McKean Realty have played a vital role in the growth of my business and have been there from the very beginning," Petersheim added,

"The beauty of living in a smaller community is that you can actually talk to the bank President if needed."

It all started when Petersheim renovated an older home for some folks from New York City. "It was a very cool house with a lot of soul. But, it was a large scale renovation which takes a lot of time and money. This is not always conducive for city folks who want the entire process to happen within a shorter period of time and with few headaches," he explained.

Thus, Petersheim's goal became one where he wanted to be able to offer homes that reflect the area's architecture (circa turn of the century), recreate the home for modern living with more closets, better insulation and higher ceilings at a moderate price with little to no red tape for the potential buyer.

In the three year's he's been in business, Petersheim sold a total of nine spec houses; built 14 homes and restored three historic homes. He sold his first house 22 months ago and his total sales revenue for 9 sold spec homes was more than

\$3.5 million dollars.

Currently, Petersheim employs a team of 4 along with 10-15 subcontractors on any given day. There are times when five to seven jobs are going on at the same time.

"The future? I hope we continue to have the success we have had in the recent past and contribute to the Sullivan County renaissance in our own little way," expressed Petersheim. "I hope that folks are as happy to have us in the County as we are to have them. If contributing to Sullivan County's smart growth through balanced and thoughtful design and development is our long term goal, we've definitely given it our best shot in these first few years." □

For more information on Catskill Farms and view photographs of his work, log on to: www.thecatskillfarms.com or contact Chuck Petersheim at 845-482-9300



Petersheim with companion, Bella, in front of Farmhouse 5.

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