

# SCANORAMA

## 53 IT'S SUMMER IN COMO

**20 STOCKHOLM**  
*Humming harbor*

**22 PARIS**  
*Royale rillettes*

**24 LONDON**  
*Gentlemen's quarters*

**44 CRETE**  
*Dixine morsels*

**60 HUDSON VALLEY**  
*Sollo brush-off*

**70 CAPE TOWN**  
*Beach soccer*

**no. 05**

✦ Looking down on Como from Brunate, which you can reach by funicular. As you'd expect in soccer-mad Italy, Stadio Giuseppe Sinigaglia has pride of place by the water.



# BEACON OF LIGHT

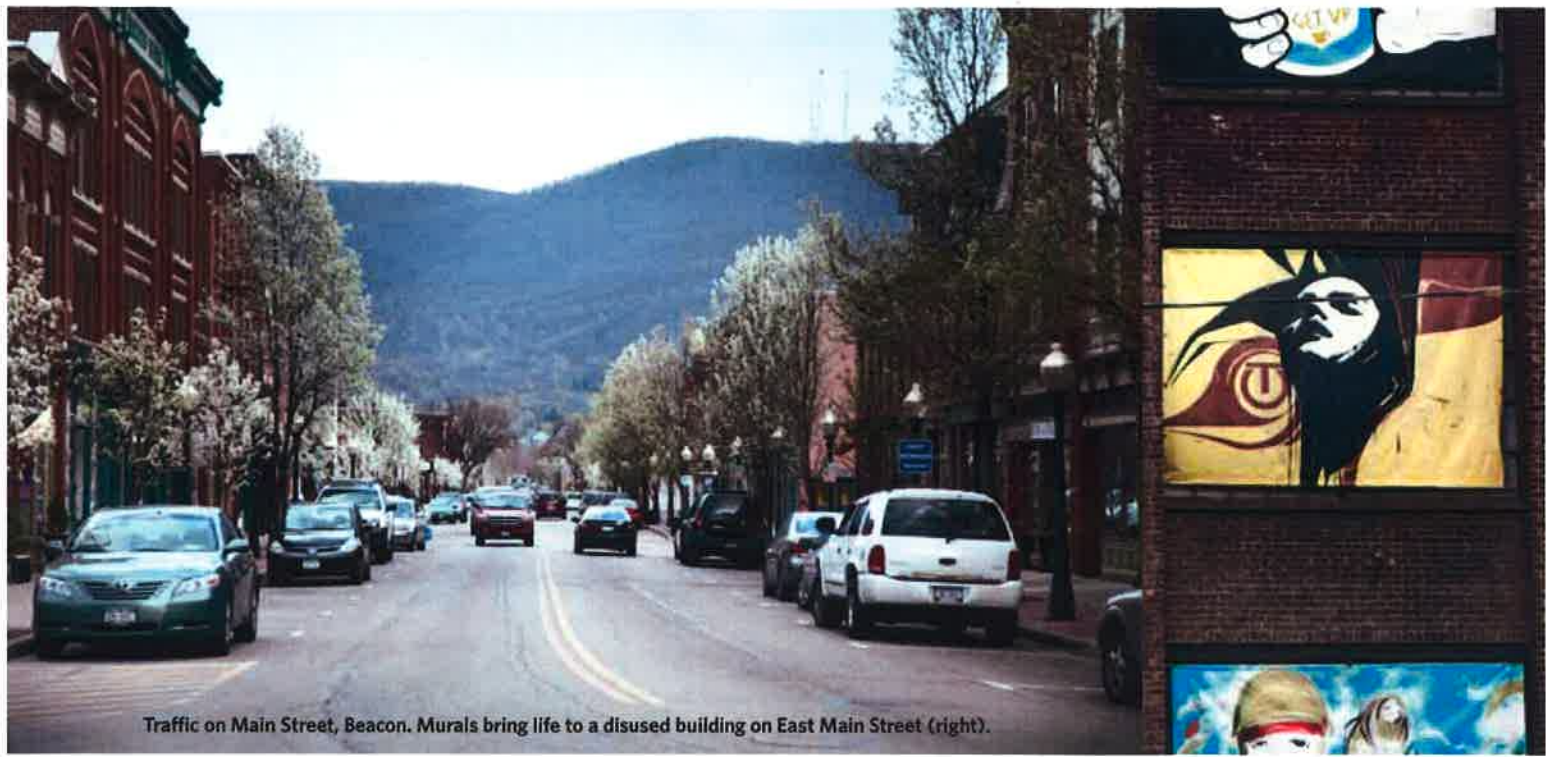
HUDSON VALLEY, NEW YORK *New York City is famously divided into uptown, midtown and downtown. But when it comes to the arts scene, talk is increasingly of upstate*

*Words by* **STEPHEN WHITLOCK** *Photographs by* **ALEXANDER BERG**



Work in progress: The Starn twins' *Big Bambú* sculpture is currently on display at New York's Metropolitan Museum of Art. The brothers work out of a former foundry in Beacon (left) on the picturesque Hudson River

**H**ead north from New York City following the route of the Hudson, the river that flows past the Meatpacking District, Hell's Kitchen and the West Village, and you quickly reach a mountainous region full of small towns that feel like they're a million miles from Manhattan. Towns with white wooden houses and white wooden fences, and Stars and Stripes flags fluttering over the porches. Towns with old-fashioned diners and yellow school buses, and bustling farmers markets on the weekend. Here, among all this rustic country life, it comes as something of a shock to find that there is amazing art and architecture: an astounding museum, an incredible sculpture park, a gleaming concert hall by Frank Gehry, as well as countless studios and galleries... ▶



Traffic on Main Street, Beacon. Murals bring life to a disused building on East Main Street (right).

## IT'S HARD TO BELIEVE THAT A MUSEUM ON THIS SCALE – AND WITH WORKS OF THIS QUALITY – CAN EXIST IN A TOWN THAT HAS A POPULATION OF JUST 15,000 PEOPLE

**ONE OF THE BEST PLACES TO START** exploring the Hudson Valley is the town of Beacon. It's easy to reach by car, but simpler and pleasanter to travel by train. You depart from Grand Central Terminal (itself one of the greatest of all American artworks) and in no time Manhattan gives way to the Bronx, then Yonkers, before you leave the city completely and are flanked by woodlands and water. For most of the journey the train sits right on the edge of the river with great views of the Hudson Highlands, a low-lying mountain range. In just 90 minutes you are transported from the ultimate big city to the quintessential small town.

The first thing you should do after stepping off the train at Beacon is turn right and walk 10 minutes to Dia:Beacon, an art museum created inside a former cookie box factory dating from 1929. Once it churned out packaging for Nabisco, but now it's been turned into a huge light-filled gallery with polished concrete floors that exhibit modern and contemporary art. Much like London's Tate Modern, many of the exhibits, including works by Andy Warhol and Gerhard Richter, take full advantage of the industrial scale of the place. There's a malevolent giant spider by Louise Bourgeois and several of Richard Serra's huge sheet metal structures. One of the most fascinating works is Michael Heizer's *North, East, South, West*, a quartet of gaping holes cut into the floor of the gallery, a work of art created by four voids.

Of course, not all of the works are as immediately striking. Watching serious-faced people gazing intently at Robert Ryman's all-white panels

hung against all-white walls, you're unable to tell if they've discovered some deeper meaning in the piece or are just wondering if the color would work in their kitchens.

Walking around Dia, you might think you're in some ultra-chic SoHo gallery, except that there's nowhere this big in SoHo. It's hard to believe that a museum on this scale – and with works of this quality – can exist in a town that has a population of just 15,000 people.

**ONCE YOU'VE EXPLORED DIA**, it's an easy walk to the heart of the town. As you'd expect, Beacon has an alternative vibe. Within a couple of blocks on Main Street you can have a tarot card reading, browse antiques, buy some hand-printed linens and have a go at glassblowing. Many of the businesses have flyers advertising events such as Ancient Thai Yoga Therapy, Kundalini Yoga and Shakti Dance. When I visit there's an announcement that The School of Jellyfish, an organic chocolate café, will be screening a documentary about the lives of Cuban Rastafarians. It's that sort of town.

Even the local Reformed Church takes an alternative approach to things by picking up a trick or two from the fast-food industry. The sign in front of the church reads: "Today's Special: Salvation & Eternal Life Combo Free!"

In Homespun Foods, an utterly charming café on Main Street that's so all-American you expect James Stewart and Katharine Hepburn to pop in at any minute, a notice tells patrons that the kitchen uses only "cage-free eggs," "grass-fed beef" and

Artist and gallery director Carl Van Brunt of the Van Brunt Gallery in Beacon





Big draw: Dia:Beacon, Riggio Galleries, Beacon, New York

Storm King Art Center, Mountainville

‘I CAME UP ONE FALL AND I SAW THE PUMPKIN FIELDS AND APPLE ORCHARDS AND SUNFLOWER FIELDS AND I WAS HOOKED. I WAS INTENT ON FINDING A BARN TO WORK IN’

“pork from happy pigs.” Images spring to mind of pigs leaping willingly into the bacon slicer to sacrifice themselves for the good people of Beacon.

Come to town during the week and there’s something a little bit Stephen King about the place – the perfect town where the population’s vanished – as many of the businesses are closed. But on the weekend it’s a bustling, lively and immensely enjoyable place to explore.

It’s little wonder that artists who were tiring of the New York City grind might move here. However, there are two other important reasons why the Hudson Valley attracts creative people: the space and the light. The light is of such purity that in the 19th century it attracted a group of landscape artists who became known as the Hudson River School.

“THERE HAVE BEEN ARTISTS HERE FOREVER,” says Kathleen Anderson, an artist who works as a guide at Dia. “The Hudson River School was also known as the School of Luminosity, as it was the light that drew them up here.”

Anderson moved out of New York City in 1990 and now has her own studio where she creates pieces using copper, such as a pair of silk organza gowns decorated with fragments of love poems spelled out with metal letters.

“I came up one fall and I saw the pumpkin fields and apple orchards and sunflower fields and I was hooked,” she says. “I was intent on finding a barn to work in.”

In Rhinebeck, a town 50km further up the val-

ley, I walked around a farmers market in a sort of daze wondering why everything – every flower, every tomato, every heirloom apple – looked more vivid than any I’d seen before. Perhaps it’s the wide river that changes the light by reflecting it back into the air. Whatever the reason, it makes the region sparkle.

Anderson and her husband did find their barn, one with no electricity or water, and lived there while they built a house and a foundry for casting sculptures.

**TWO (OR SHOULD THAT BE ONE?)** OF the biggest names on the Hudson Valley art scene are the identical Starn twins, Doug and Mike, who work out of a disused foundry in Beacon. Their monumental *Big Bambú* sculpture can be seen on the roof of the Metropolitan Museum of Art overlooking Central Park in Manhattan until the end of October. The twins employed mountain climbers to assemble the work, a complex structure created from thousands of bamboo poles tied together with rope. Visitors to the Met can walk through it and even climb it. Gary Tinterow, the museum’s curator of modern art, commissioned it after he saw a similar piece by the twins in 2008.

“When I saw it in Beacon I thought how great it could be for the roof,” he told *The New York Times*. “It’s our largest, most complicated endeavor and the only one that invites the public to participate.”

**MORE MONUMENTAL WORKS OF ART** can be enjoyed near Beacon. A quick drive across the bridge brings ▶

Kathleen Anderson, tour coordinator at Dia:Beacon, in her studio west of Beacon in the Shawangunk Mountains where she produces works such as *Energy Exchange*





Beacon's combination of city sophistication and small-town charm, like the weir at East Main St (right), attracts creative types.

'Homespun Foods only serves 'pork from happy pigs'

you to the Storm King Art Center in Mountainville, which this year celebrates its 50th anniversary. To call it a sculpture park doesn't do it justice. Originally founded as a gallery to bring together works by the Hudson River School painters, Storm King has grown to cover 500 acres in the Hudson Highlands. Among the sculptures on display are pieces by Barbara Hepworth, Alexander Calder, Henry Moore, Andy Goldsworthy, and many others.

The Hudson Valley is full of unexpected, inspir-

ing places like this. An hour's drive north from Beacon brings you to Bard College, which has a concert hall designed by Frank Gehry that hosts a seven-week music festival during the summer. Continue up the valley and there's the Omi International Arts Center, which offers residency programs to writers and artists, and has a 100 acre sculpture park. There's also no end of great hotels and restaurants that take advantage of the region's produce.

**FACT SHEET**

**See**

- Dia:Beacon**  
Beacon  
A spectacular art gallery in a former factory.  
[www.diabeacon.org](http://www.diabeacon.org)
- Storm King Art Center**  
Mountainville  
Pack a picnic.  
[www.stormking.org](http://www.stormking.org)
- The Richard B. Fisher Center for the Performing Arts at Bard College**  
Annandale-on-Hudson  
Frank Gehry's gleaming concert hall.  
[www.fishercenter.bard.edu](http://www.fishercenter.bard.edu)
- Omi International Arts Center**  
Ghent  
Plus Fields Sculpture Park.  
[www.artomi.org](http://www.artomi.org)
- Van Brunt Gallery**  
Beacon  
The best gallery in Beacon.  
[www.vanbruntgallery.com](http://www.vanbruntgallery.com)

**William Maxwell Fine Arts**

Peekskill  
Exhibition space for emerging artists.  
[www.maxwellfinearts.com](http://www.maxwellfinearts.com)

**Sleep**

- Mount Merino Manor**  
Hudson  
High-end B&B.  
[www.mountmerino-manor.com](http://www.mountmerino-manor.com)
- Mohonk Mountain House**  
New Paltz  
A breathtaking lakeside hotel built in 1869.  
[www.mohonk.com](http://www.mohonk.com)
- The Beekman Arms & Delamater Inn**  
Rhinebeck  
Neighboring historic inns with 73 rooms between them.  
[www.beekmandelamater-inn.com](http://www.beekmandelamater-inn.com)

**Eat**

- Homespun Foods**  
Beacon  
Beacon's best café, with outstanding homemade cakes.  
[www.homespunfoods.com](http://www.homespunfoods.com)
- Swoon Kitchenbar**  
Hudson  
Restaurant that prides itself on using local produce.  
[www.swoonkitchenbar.com](http://www.swoonkitchenbar.com)
- Gigi Trattoria**  
Rhinebeck  
Mediterranean food from a noted cookbook author and nutritionist.  
[www.gigitrattoria.com](http://www.gigitrattoria.com)
- Blue Hill at Stone Barns**  
Pocantico Hills  
Stunningly beautiful restaurant just 50km north of New York.  
[www.bluehillfarm.com](http://www.bluehillfarm.com)

**LEAVING BEACON TO RETURN** to New York City the train carriage is quiet. In front of me, a man is telling his teenage son anecdotes about the places we're passing. Across the water, looking like a castle on the cliff top, is the fabled West Point, the military academy attended by two American presidents (Dwight David Eisenhower and Ulysses S. Grant, I learn). He talks about a ruined castle on an island that looks like something from a ghost story. Then we come to Peekskill where, he explains, Frank L. Baum, the author of *The Wonderful Wizard of Oz*, went to military academy.

"His first day there, he's asking for directions," father says to son. "And do you know what they tell him? They tell him to follow the yellow brick road." How appropriate that this area, so full of magic and imagination, was the inspiration for the road to the Emerald City.

Soon we pass Yankee Stadium and the Manhattan skyline looms ahead of us before the train goes underground and pulls into Grand Central. Heading down to the subway, a teenage girl is busking on the platform, singing *Somewhere* from *West Side Story*, as the passengers rush past, hurrying on their way to uptown and downtown. ✦