It seems like everyone wants to move Upstate these days, but no one knows how. Having personally made the move from Brooklyn to the Catskills was natural for many of us here at Escape Brooklyn–plus many others. In collaboration with the Ulster County Office of Economic Development (Ulster County includes towns like Kingston, New Paltz, Phoenicia, Woodstock, Saugerties and Ellenville), Escape Brooklyn is presenting some stories of recent transplants who have successfully “made it”–and are now living their dream Upstate.

First in this series is Susan Yi, the co-founder of Brooklyn Cider House, and a recent transplant from NYC to New Paltz. There, she and her husband Rayco live and work on their farm, growing apples to create all natural (delicious) cider. Though she grew up in a household of people who lived for the food & beverage industry, Susan never had an interest in working in the field until her brother Peter became inspired by Basque cider houses; from there, the brother-sister duo created Brooklyn Cider House.

Read on for our interview with Susan about moving Upstate—and hear more specifics about how to do the same thing at next week’s [Happy Hour at Brooklyn Cider House](https://www.eventbrite.com/e/happy-hour-at-brooklyn-cider-house-relocating-to-the-hudson-valley-tickets-61172449443). Reps from Ulster County Office of Economic Development will be there to answer your questions about all the basics of how to make the big move—where to live, sites and funding incentives for your business, finding a new job or school or employees, the best daycare and more.

The event is Tuesday, June 18th, from 6-8pm. It’s free, but registration is required. Along with Happy Hour drink specials, complimentary apps will be provided as well. [Admission is free, but RSVP is required; you can do so here.](https://www.eventbrite.com/e/happy-hour-at-brooklyn-cider-house-relocating-to-the-hudson-valley-tickets-61172449443) See you there, and read on for our conversation with Susan Yi!

**Tell me about your recent experience moving Upstate: when, where, why, and how?**

My husband Rayco and I moved to Gardiner, March 1st, to run the farm operations in New Paltz. My brother Peter had been juggling the farm and the Brooklyn location, but we thought it would be best financially and for the overall business for one of us to be up here full time, rather than relying on hired management.

**Totally. So it was an easy decision?**

Yes. My husband and I were ready to leave the city–at least for a while. We were excited about moving to an area that was more relaxed and rural. Plus, one of the reasons we had purchased an orchard in New Paltz was because of its proximity to the Shawangunks. We like to climb and we love the outdoors.

**What’s most different about living Upstate?**

Space! I have so much space, I don’t know what to do with it. I’ve lived in NYC all my life and always lived in small apartments. It’s amazing how space can de-stress and de-clutter your world!

Also, people and things move at a different pace here and no matter how much you work (we work a lot), I think that being closer to nature always puts things back into perspective. People are generally really friendly and helpful and it’s easier to meet and get to know people.

**What about free time–do you have more free time now? Is your job any less demanding?**

Running the farm and the business here is all consuming; I wish I had more time to enjoy all that this area offers. I think I may be working more, but the environment actually helps me to cope better with the demands and stress of work and life.

**Tell me about your community. How would you describe it? Have you met many people your age? Any other “expats?”**

We are connecting mostly to families with children since we have two daughters, and we’ve met a lot of people who are originally from the city… oddly enough, mostly from Brooklyn. We’ve met a lot of families who moved up here to raise a family and commute a few times a week for work.

**There’s definitely been an influx of “expats” in the Hudson Valley/Catskills. What kind of jobs do the other expats have? Are they commuting or do they work remotely?**

Nearly all of the expats I’ve met up here are in some type of creative industry — writers, photographers, set designers, graphic designers, etc. Some are business owners. Most of them commute to the city several times per week and seem to have some flexibility with their work schedules, so they are not commuting 5 times per week. Others are able to work remotely from their home offices. I have yet to meet anyone who has made the move and is unhappy about it!

**What’s been your favorite part about the move?**

I love being so in touch with nature. We moved here at the perfect time, in March, just in time for the change of seasons and the rebirth of everything. Since moving here, I saw three baby robins from the time the eggs were laid to the time they left their nest, families of deer hanging out outside my bedroom window, and flocks of geese and fuzzy goslings and a bald eagle (no joke!) fishing in the pond at our farm, and they’ve become a regular part of life.

As a city girl, these things are mind-blowing; I feel like a little girl seeing these things up close for the first time.

**Tell me about the orchard and your day-to-day life there.**

My husband is in charge of the farm management, but neither of us is in the field on a daily basis. In the winter, the farm workers are pruning the trees; currently, we are fertilizing, using IPM to combat disease and insects that are prevalent in the Hudson Valley, and tending to the baby apple trees until the fall, when we will harvest the apples. We enjoy working amidst the apple trees on a daily basis as we deal with the pavilion and farm stand business.

**It’s currently Cider Week at the Brooklyn Cider House Upstate. Tell me more about Cider Week!**

We have some amazing cideries in the Hudson Valley and there are many events all over highlighting ciders and cider producers in the area. For instance, we are hosting the closeout event for Cider Week Hudson Valley with a Cider Tasting Party in New Paltz. We’re hosting 12 other cider makers, who will be pouring tastings and selling their ciders. We’re also having live music by Sol Liebeskind and a pig roast, along with our wood-fired pizza and burgers.

**Can people visit your Orchard?**

Yes! Our orchard is open from April through the first weekend of November. We have a tasting room and a food pavilion so you can enjoy ciders and wood-fired pizza and burgers overlooking our pond. We also have pick-your-own in the fall. It’s really a beautiful place to hang out with your family and your pets!