**June 2019**

**EMAIL SUBJECT LINE:**

**Phoenicia is a Great Place to do Business in Ulster County**

**Feature article:**

**Three Successful Ulster County Businesses**

**Rail Explorers, Wendy’s Nutty Cheese and Woodstock Brewing**

**Photo: Phoenicia by photographer Leon Taufield.jpg**

**Please give photo credit for this.**

Phoenicia, one of Ulster County’s most eclectic destinations, offers a distinctive mix of Catskills charm, small town vibe and upscale aspirations. Nestled along the banks of the Esopus Creek and at the foothills of the Catskill Mountains, this community in the Town of Shandaken is easily accessible from Route 28 or via scenic back roads. Phoenicia is treasured by home-based business wholesalers like Wendy’s Nutty Cheese, eco-tourism entrepreneurs like Rail Explorers, and craft beer enthusiasts like Woodstock Brewing, as well as global niche manufacturers including Woodstock Chimes, fly fishermen turned entrepreneurs at Esopus Creel, arts leaders like the Phoenicia Festival of the Voice, and resort/spa owner, The Emerson, among a growing number of others.

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**Rail Explorers**

Rail Explorers, a “Green Eco Tourism” operation, opened in April 2018 on the Ulster & Delaware Railroad in Phoenicia. Mary Jo Lu and her husband, Alex Catchpoole, discovered Ulster County in 2002 after moving from Australia to New York City. “We had just had our first baby, came to Woodstock to visit, and felt an affinity, straightaway. Two years later, we had two children and bought a getaway property in Lake Katrine to decompress from the energy of New York City.”

Lu’s addiction to Korean soap operas inspired their business. “In 2012, I saw a couple riding a contraption on a K-Drama and was like, ‘what the heck is that?!’ I hunted one down, left my job in advertising and, by 2015, we opened the first rail bike operation in America in the Adirondacks,” says Lu. “All of this was based on the magic of the railroad and being captivated by pedaling so freely with no engine.”

It was the first time rail bikes cycled outside of South Korea, where they were designed and manufactured. Following two successful years in Saranac Lake, the couple continued to develop their business model.

Today, Rail Explorers operates in Phoenicia, Newport, RI, and Las Vegas. More than 110,000 riders have experienced the joy of pedaling along railroad tracks in stunning natural surroundings.

“Ulster County officials put out an RFP for the rail line and they thought we had the best proposal,” says Lu. “It’s been a perfect partnership, a win-win on economic and environmental levels. We love giving shout-outs to businesses in the Catskills. Ulster County Office of Tourism has been one of our biggest helps—Rick Remsnyder knows everybody. We work closely with other businesses, like The Emerson (which offers a 10% midweek discount), Belleayre Zipline, The Empire State Railroad Museum, and the members of the Phoenicia Business Association, who embraced us from day one. My employees visit locations so they can talk to our customers about other places to experience. They’re basically walking visitor info centers.”

Rail Explorers is open Wednesday to Monday until July 4 and then seven days a week through autumn.

**Wendy’s Nutty Cheese**

Wendy Grossman moved to Phoenicia in 1996 after 25 years in New York City, and lives on ten undisturbed acres of a forest preserve. “I never dreamed I’d be living in a place where bears are on my front porch,” she laughs. “But I’m a loner, and living in the city made me miserable, gave me a lot of anxiety. I love our little three-block town, and everyone knows my name. It’s a lovely, sweet place to live, and people let you mind your own business.”

Grossman’s been creating delicious, nutritious vegetarian and vegan meals since before she moved upstate, and Wendy’s Vegetarian Kitchen has really taken off. “I had to hire a part-time person, as my business has grown exponentially.” Her non-GMO kitchen—built as an addition to her home—is certified by the NYS Department of Agricultural and Markets and licensed for wholesale distribution.

This is her third season offering Wendy’s Nutty Cheese, a signature gourmet product driven by her own chef concepts. “I want to taste this flavor in a vegan cheese. It’s a product that no one else makes in the vegan cheese world, and it’s remarkable how well it’s doing,” she says. It is made with all organic ingredients, with cashews as the base, and Grossman dries locally sourced herbs for yearlong use.

Grossman relies upon Sam Kandel, Advanced Certified Business Advisor, Mid Hudson Small Business Development Center, who shares information about low-interest loans and financing, and other resources. “He’s always super helpful to me, and I call him for all my business questions,” she says. “He recently reviewed a new contract with a new client and suggested some changes—saving me a great deal of money in attorney’s fees. I wouldn’t hesitate to ask him anything about my business.”

“Phoenicia is a very appealing place to do business,” says Grossman. “It’s so close to the city, and all the major distributors come here to do deliveries.”

Wendy’s Nutty Cheese is available in several retail locations and via online orders.

**Woodstock Brewing**

Rick Shobin originates from Long Island and previously worked in finance. He began coming upstate to go hiking with friends in 2003, and, five years later, bought his Woodstock home. His friend from NYC, Scott Shimomura, visited on weekends and the two began to create test batches of craft beer in Shobin’s Woodstock garage.

“We needed a place that was big enough, and found it in Phoenicia, where we have a 1,600 square foot restaurant and 6,500 square feet of brewery space.” The two friends opened Woodstock Brewing on January 5, 2018, and they make all their own beers. They also offer Mexican food, with vegetarian and vegan options, and a variety of beverages. Shimomura, head brewer, lives in Mount Tremper, and just hired a new assistant brewer. They employ 18 full- and part-time workers.

“I’m 42, and the majority of our staff are in their 20s,” says Shobin. “When I first started visiting the Catskills, tourism, the youth culture and [the prevalence of] working remotely had just started. Now, the population is reaching a more critical mass and will sustain additional businesses and people looking for jobs.”

Woodstock Brewing’s menu provides a tasty ‘extra’ for those who enjoy brewery tourism. “Our food is really good, and every penny we make we put back into the business—to grow it and to give a better customer experience. We take reviews and recommendations to heart,” he says. “We’ve had really rapid growth and spend our resources to make improvements.”

“This is an incredibly great place to live if you love the outdoors and the mountains. If you come here, you have to value that over the convenience factor of walking outside to grab a cup of coffee,” Shobin adds. “There’s a very high quality of life here, amazing people, and things tend to be more meaningful. It’s a more holistic lifestyle. What I miss in say, eating varieties of food… well, there are benefits to both here and the city. I lived in the city 20 years, but you can’t get the same fresh air, scenery, rivers, lakes and streams and here, I can walk outside in my back yard with my dog off leash.”

Woodstock Brewing is open Thursday through Monday, with live music on Thursday evenings.

**Rail Explorers**

[www.RailExplorers.net](http://www.railexplorers.net/)

**Wendy’s Vegetarian Kitchen**

<https://wendysvegetariankitchen.com/>

**Woodstock Brewing**

<https://www.drinkwoodstock.com/>

**Mid Hudson Small Business Development Center**

<http://www.nyssbdc.org/centers/centers.aspx?centid=94>

**Phoenicia Business Association**

<http://www.phoeniciany.com/>

**Ulster County Tourism**

<https://www.ulstercountyalive.com/>

**Featured Property – there will be only one this month so make sure title is singular**

**PHOTO: Grab the first photo from link below**

[**https://www.loopnet.com/Listing/3094-State-Route-28-Shokan-NY/3671674/**](https://www.loopnet.com/Listing/3094-State-Route-28-Shokan-NY/3671674/)

**3094 State Route 28, Shokan**

**5,600 SF Retail Building**

Situated on approximately 2 acres of land with frontage on busy highway, this 5,600 square foot retail building in Shokan is in excellent condition. It has a 4,000 square foot footprint and a 1,600 square foot partially finished second floor.

For further information or to schedule a site visit, please call (845) 340-3556.

**Ulster County Businesses in the News**

The [Ulster County Office of Economic Development](https://ulstercountyny.gov/ulsterforbusiness/services) offers a full range of business services. Our staff has the expertise and connections you need to achieve your business goals—and we would be happy to meet with you. If you want to expand an existing business, establish a new location, or need to hire well-qualified employees, we are here to help. Give us a call at (845) 340-3556.

**Woodstock Chimes**

**PHOTO: Feel free to grab something from https://www.chimes.com/**

Or use attached photo of Garry

Garry and Diane Kvistad are celebrating 40 years at the helm of Woodstock Chimes, their family-owned business in Shokan. From a kitchen table start-up to a global distributor of nearly 700 distinctive products, they are the leading manufacturer of musically tuned wind chimes.

[Learn more](https://ulstercountyny.gov/ulsterforbusiness/food-beverage) about niche manufacturing in Ulster County.

**Phoenicia Festival of the Voice**

I attached a banner grab from their website; feel free to use something else.

Phoenicia International Festival of the Voice celebrates its 10th anniversary August 2-4 by honoring African-American culture and talent. We’ve assisted this non-profit with several business needs, including successful funding proposals.

[Learn more](https://ulstercountyny.gov/ulsterforbusiness/find-funding) about grants, loans and financial incentives in Ulster County.

**Upcoming Events**

**Are You “Upstate Curious?”**

**Come to our Happy Hour event!**

PHOTO: You have photo for this on file.

**Happy Hour at Brooklyn Cider House**

**Tuesday, June 18, 2019 from 6:00-8:00 p.m.**

Brooklyn Cider House made New Paltz its second home for business. You can do it too! Come to our free happy hour for complimentary tasty bites, discounted beverages, and Q&A about moving yourself and your business to the Hudson Valley.

**Where:**Brooklyn Cider House, 1100 Flushing Avenue Brooklyn, NY 11237

\*FREE\* to attend. Registration required. [Click here to register.](https://ulstercountyny.us12.list-manage.com/track/click?u=9377d356d42fd0524a68aa334&id=b7e05495fa&e=fbbb81e7e6)

**Gone Fishing!**

**Photo attached: Esopus Creel1**

**June 28-30, 2019**

**September 6-8, 2019**

Esopus Creel is a newcomer to the Phoenicia business community, thanks to our fantastic Catskills fishing. For the past four years, they have led guided fishing tours and the recent opening of their retail space is a natural outgrowth of demand for their offerings. Esopus Creel offers sales, gear rentals, fly fishing instruction and guided trips on the Esopus Creek and surrounding waters. They have two packages for guided fishing (June 28-30 at The Pines) or tournament fishing (September 6-8 at Emerson Resort & Spa) with some featured amenities.

Learn more [here](http://www.esopuscreel.com/events/).

**Summer Hoot**

**I attached a photo grab from Summer Hoot page but feel free to select something else.**

**August 23-25, 2019**

This 3-day music festival is your source for family fun in nature, local food and crafts, and lyric-laden, foot-stomping, soul-soothing, fiddle-infused live music where the Catskills meet the Hudson River Valley. The Ashokan Center, New York State’s longest running environmental education center, is now 100% powered by solar energy. Its gorgeous 385-acre campus features several historically significant buildings and offers forests, fields, trails and streams. It is a full-service destination for weddings, conferences, retreats—and music!

Learn more [here](https://ashokancenter.org/events/august-23-25-2019-the-summer-hoot/).