

AN OLD-

Westchester's barns link together our county's

FASHIONED

rural past with its equestrian-loving present.

BARN-RAISING

Our county has a wide variety of barns—from huge commercial affairs for horse shows to smaller ones adorning private properties—reminding us of our farming roots, and adding rustic beauty and charm to our countryside. After driving so many of our back roads in search of the county's most picturesque barns, I became curious about the derivation of the word. From the Old English bereaern (or barley house), a barn is described as a large farm outbuilding used chiefly for storing hay, grain, or livestock. Today, the livestock Westchester's barns most often house are pretty, pampered horses. (Although I must report walking into a horse barn in Bedford and finding something completely unexpected: a zebra!)

Photographs and Text by **Leslie Long**

Originally built in 1770 as a flour mill, Tide Mill Yacht Basin on Rye's Kirby Lane was powered by the tides. To be ready when the tide came in to turn the two stone grinding wheels, the miller actually slept on the premises, waking with an alarm clock rigged to the water level. At the turn of the century, the barn became the centerpiece of the boatyard it is today—offering summer boat dockage, winter storage, boat repair, and a ship's store.



(This page): Yes, barns come in all colors, but this forest-green one is a stunner—and the perfect foil to a bright blue sky. Ringed by evergreens, it enhances a North Salem meadow.

(Opposite page, top): The sign out front says “Horsefly Farm,” which is endearing in itself. Part of an idyllic compound along North Salem’s pastoral Baxter Road, this rustic gray barn sits amid stately trees and gently sloping fields.

(Opposite page, bottom): Spring was starting to emerge along Guard Hill Road in Bedford, where this fanciful barn backs up to the spectacular 230-acre Sunnyfield Farm—a dreamy complex of buttercream stables and emerald pastures. In the distance, several young foals were gamboling about in the misty dawn under the watchful eyes of their mothers. Sigh.





StonyCreek Farm's striking mustard-and-hunter-green stable marks an apropos beginning to Baxter Road, one of Westchester's most scenic byways. This premier equestrian facility in the heart of North Salem's horse country offers training, boarding, riding lessons, and something truly extraordinary: access to 129 bucolic acres in the adjacent North Salem Open Land Foundation.



(Above): The immaculate barns at StonyCreek Farm are home to 28 handsome horses. When they aren't relaxing in their stables, they're jumping, hunting, training, or being ridden during the expert instruction offered here. (Below): Muscoot Farm in Somers has long been a favorite spot for school trips and family outings. This rustic storage barn, one of the farm's oldest, was already on the land in 1880 when the Hopkins family purchased the farm. Once gray, it's still known as The Gray Barn by the staff at Muscoot—although it now wears a coat of classic red.



An impressive array of country estates can be found along Old Post Road in Bedford. As part of one of the more evocative ones, this fresh white fence leads the way to a perfectly matching barn.

Researching this feature inspired Larchmont resident Leslie Long to revisit one of her childhood passions: horseback riding. More of her work can be seen at leslielongportfolio.com.