

Let Me Take You to...

# funky



# town

An artsy little village is a blast from the past, with centuries-old rivertown architecture, great galleries, five independent bookstores, quirky shops and four-star dining and, oh yes, perfect Palisades views

BY NANCY ANGIELLO  
Photography by Iko



OPPOSITE PAGE (LEFT TO RIGHT): CANDY, CHOCOLATE AND ALL THINGS SWEET CAN BE FOUND AT FESTIVITIES; GWENAEL AND ANNIE GOULET IN THEIR OOH-LA-LA CHARMING BUFFET DE LA GARE. THIS PAGE (CLOCKWISE FROM TOP RIGHT): THE LUNCH CROWD OUTSIDE THE Y-COOK CAFÉ; TAI CHI ENTHUSIASTS PRACTICE ALONG THE HUDSON; INUIT JEWELRY AT ARCTIC ARTISTRY; SELECTIONS FROM THOMAS' COFFEE AND TEA.

# I love that the Good Witch from *The Wizard of Oz* once lived here.

(Well, at least Billie Burke, the actress who played the part, did.) To me it means that a kind of over-the-top, extroverted, artistic personality pervades Hastings-on-Hudson, the funky little rivertown

in which I live, which is also home to plenty of damn-proud salt-of-the-earth types. This mix of personalities in my small rivertown (Hastings is about two square miles in size with a population of 7,715) is what makes living—and visiting—here so fun.

Funky shops, unusual galleries and a popular museum are also a part of the Bohemian package. And if you're a foodie, you already know our two famed restaurants—a top-rated French bistro and a waterfront haven—with many choices in between, including a classic '50s diner.

Sip wine, watch the sunset, and feast on seasonal produce plucked fresh from the patio-side garden at Harvest-on-Hudson



Grab a good read and try the pecan pie and fresh-perked coffee at Thomas' Coffee and Tea

And Hastings is truly a book lovers' dream-come-true—with five independent bookstores in one tiny town. More fun comes with discovering that almost all the shops and restaurants are family-owned: mom and pop, sister and sister or mother and son. And since most of them live in Hastings, it feels a little like living in Mayberry.

And for all its artsy-ness and natural feel (there are 175 acres of parks, woodlands, ponds and streams), Hastings has an industrial history which has left an indelible stamp on both the architecture and entire vibe of the village. (According to one theory, Hastings-on-Hudson got its alliterative name in the early 1800s, by the English owner of the first village factory, who named it after his hometown.)

An asphalt factory, for example, produced those hexagonal paving blocks found all over Manhattan's Central Park (10 million were shipped worldwide). Anaconda Cable Company was a vast employer of residents for decades; people worked around the clock in shifts. And where did they head after work? To bars, saloons, taverns, more bars and some diners. Yes, in one dubious era, Hastings was home to some 30 bars—today those old bars house lovely little shops and quality restaurants. "We've reused our architecture very well," says Village Historian David Willis McCullough. And though the village isn't cookie-cutter-perfect, there's a quaint-yet-not-overly-cutesy feel that will make you want to linger, take in the views and spend time getting to know my town and what it has to offer. Here, an insider's guide to the best of the village.

where to wine, dine & nibble

## HARVEST-ON-HUDSON

1 River Street

(914) 478-2800

FARM-TO-TABLE COOKING IS ALL THE RAGE NOW, BUT Harvest-on-Hudson was onto this concept years ago with its fantastic patio-side garden, that, by the way, also overlooks the Hudson River and the Palisades. New chef Vincent Barcelona's recipes are often inspired



by the garden's harvest: herbs, tomatoes, beans, blueberries, zucchini, chard and corn. Eating indoors is pretty breathtaking, too. Check out the soaring stone fireplace—perfect to cozy up to come cool weather—and the vaulted, uplifting loft-like ceilings. After dinner, stroll the waterfront park and check out the Tower Ridge Yacht Club next door—a humble place in a serene setting that dates back to 1891. You're unlikely to get a better river view anywhere.

### BUFFET DE LA GARE

155 Southside Avenue  
(914) 478-1671

**CHEF GWENAELE GOULET AND HIS WIFE AND** co-owner, Annie Goulet, have run their charming, intimate, elegant, country-style "French restaurant deluxe" for 24 years. You'll be greeted by the petite Annie, who rules like she's in her own dining room—with soothing burgundy and cream interior, gas lamps, pressed tin ceilings and walls, fresh flowers, a grand, carved bar and the Quimper Faïence collection displayed on the wall. Chef Goulet, who trained in Paris and Brittany, creates dishes that, once you've tasted, you crave until you get to enjoy them again, only to later crave again. For the first course: a *vol-au-vent de homard*, lobster in a pastry filled with leeks and green and

white asparagus in a truffle Champagne sauce, or *nage de fruit de mer*—shrimp, scallops and seafood raviolis in lobster broth, ginger and spices. For an entrée, try the *cassoulet Buffet de la Gare*—a classic French casserole of lamb, duck, pork and white beans. For dessert: tarte Tatin, of course.

### THOMAS' COFFEE AND TEA

579 Warburton Avenue  
(914) 478-1574

**THOMAS' COFFEE AND TEA IS** the place in Hastings to chill out with a book, eavesdrop on locals and grab a cup of coffee—or a light lunch. Celebs Bill Murray, Billy Crystal, Yo-Yo Ma and Susan Sarandon have stopped by the 12-year-old haven, tucked behind the vintage movie theater-turned-mini-lane of shops. Everything on the menu is consistently delicious (cheap, too: from \$3.55 for soup; \$6 for a sandwich).

### 19 MAIN STREET

19 Main Street  
(914) 478-0404

**19 MAIN STREET HAS RECEIVED** positive buzz since its opening in late 2003. The simple, lovely setting, classic blue awning and starched white tablecloth whisper "expensive," but the place is affordable. Owner and veteran restaurateur Jim Maceda describes the food as contemporary American cuisine. "Seafood specials are the big draw here, such as herb-crusted fresh seared tuna," says Maceda. "Plus, everyone loves the steamed mussels with shallots, white wine and fresh herbs and the pear salad with baby greens."

The single bestseller at newcomer 19 Main Street is this pear salad with baby greens, Gorgonzola and glazed pecans in balsamic vinaigrette



**Chef Maud Franse of Maud's Tavern, a.k.a. the Cheers of Hastings, serves up American cuisine with an international flair**

### MAUD'S TAVERN

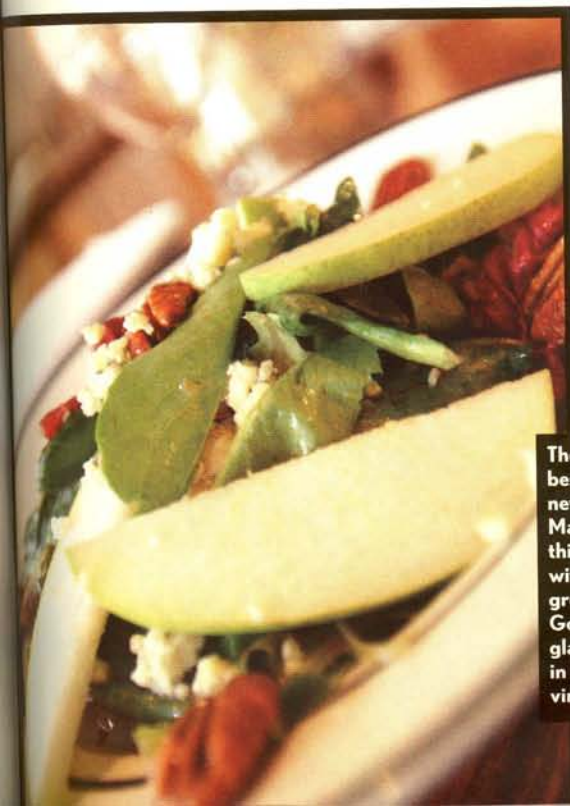
149 Southside Avenue  
(914) 478-2326

**THE VIEW OF THE RIVER FROM OUTSIDE** Maud's Tavern is exactly the same as the one famed Hudson River painter and Hastings resident Jasper Cropsey immortalized in the late 1880s. This little block of squat, shingled houses has remained unchanged for at least a century. Maud's Tavern, on the corner, is a jolly good tavern in feel, but the food's the draw. Chef Maud Franse cooks her signature American cuisine which has, she says, "international flair," offering mussels in white wine garlic and herb broth, pot roasted-style chicken, and fish dishes such as grilled salmon with ginger-scalion sauce, codfish with horseradish crust, or tilapia baked with lime, cilantro, cumin, red peppers, onions and tomatoes. Maud's husband, John Franse, meets and greets diners at the door.

### BLU

100 River Street  
(914) 478-4481

**NOT TO BE CONFUSED WITH BLUE IN WHITE** Plains, Bleu in Greenwich or Blue Hill in Pocantico Hills, Blu in Hastings is a



remarkably romantic spot overlooking the Hudson. Catch a Blu Wave (rum, pineapple juice and blue curaçao) there along with contemporary American bistro cuisine.

### HASTINGS CENTER RESTAURANT

540 Warburton Avenue  
(914) 478-3610

**THIS 56-YEAR-OLD CLASSIC GREEK** diner ("The Center" by old-timers and "The Diner" by newcomers like me—"new" meaning having lived here less than 30 years) should be a historical landmark. Stopped in time, and saved from heartless, styleless renovation, the diner's fab '50s salmon-pink leatherette booths, original chrome and pink neon sign above the door, and '50s mentality (friendly, family-run, without pretension) is here to stay. Says realtor Mary Madigan of Houlihan Lawrence, "This is *the* center of Hastings—where you'll hear all the news and all the gossip, and see everyone you know."

### Y-COOK CAFÉ

16 Main Street  
(914) 478-8900

**COME HERE IF YOU'RE COUNTING CARBS—**Y-Cook's menu is color coded for low-carb choices and even has nutritional info so you can make smart choices, one of which is saving room for dessert. The housemade low-carb cheesecake, parfaits and chocolate pudding are divine.

### SCOOPS ON THE HUDSON

575 Warburton Avenue  
(914) 478-0784

**HASTINGS'S ONE-AND-ONLY ICE CREAM** shop has been dishing out cold comfort for 16 years. It's no wonder Hillary Clinton stopped in for a photo op and a cone on her campaign trail—the yummy Sedutto ice cream comes in 30 different flavors. Try the butterscotch praline and the cappuccino.

### THE HASTINGS FARMERS' MARKET

**THE FARMERS' MARKET IS ONE OF THE** main sights on "the brag tour." Set in the library's parking lot, the market is where we lucky residents and our lucky



Scoops owner Frank Rotiroti knows his regular customers by name and he keeps them coming back for more with treats like this banana split

ceiling with Buck's paintings of nudes, landscapes and studies of flowers.

### ANIMAZING GALLERY

549 Warburton Avenue  
(914) 478-7278

**WALK THROUGH THE GALLERY'S DOOR** and you'll see a huge, handcarved wooden tree, and sense right away that this shop is totally fun. The tree's branches are hung with wild mobiles of painted dancers and acrobats by Nicoletta Barolini (\$45-\$100), representing the type of handmade, one-of-a-kind, signed, contemporary American Craft pieces you'll find at Animazing (many of the artists are Hastings residents). Another big part of the gallery is animation art, such as an original Charles Schulz cartoon of Snoopy as the Red Baron (\$4,000 for the original; limited edition prints start at \$99). You'll also find lots of handcrafted, unique

pieces, some fun and funky, others beautiful yet functional: a Linda Angel handpainted child's chair (\$200), chandelier crystal necklaces (\$85-\$150) and handblown glass hummingbirds (\$24-\$34).

### NEWINGTON CROPSEY FOUNDATION

25 Cropsey Lane  
(914) 478-7990

**IT'S SO HASTINGS: FIRST BARS TURNED INTO** cool shops and restaurants; now this, the former town dump transformed into a renowned museum, attracting some 4,000 visitors each year. Behind the train station parking lot is what looks like an old Hudson River private mansion and estate, complete with a miniature lake and outdoor sculptures. But the mansion is an art museum, the Newington Cropsey Foundation, built in 1994 in honor of Jasper Cropsey, the leading Hudson River School painter. Besides this grand art gallery, the grounds include Cropsey's last home/studio, a yellow gothic revival Victorian on a hill above the museum. Tours of Cropsey's house, a National Historic Trust site, and the gallery are available by appointment only.

neighbors get Hudson Valley farm fruit, vegetables, baked goods, organic poultry and eggs, plus cheese and wines. If you go there, make sure to take a close look at the work of two illustrious former residents: The outdoor sculpture "Between Heaven and Earth" in front of the library, was created by world-famous sculptor Jacques Lipchitz, and across from it is the Village Hall, designed by Richmond H. Shreve, one of the Empire State Building architects.

The market is open Saturdays from June through November 20.

## art galleries

### YELLOW DOOR STUDIO

1 North Street  
(914) 478-4200

**WALK THROUGH A FRAGRANT GARDEN TO** the bright, Van Gogh sunflower-inspired door that gives the studio its name. The driftwood art you'll find there is engraved with poems by artist and studio owner Stephanie Buck, a 30-year practicing psychotherapist specializing in expressive art therapy. Her work and studio are, she says, "in honor of the creative process of all people." Besides housing art therapy workshops for teens and adults, the gallery is filled floor-to-

## ARCTIC ARTISTRY

2 Spring Street  
(914) 478-7179

**THIS GALLERY'S UNUSUAL NAME MAY** arouse curiosity: *What, pray tell, is Arctic art?* No, it's not art made of ice but gorgeous native stone sculptures, paintings and prints created by Inuit artists from Arctic Canada, Alaska and Greenland. Owner Elaine Blechman says her collection is a rarity since, she notes, "only a handful of galleries around the world deal in Inuit art." Dating from 1950 to the present, much of the artwork is inspired by Inuit mythologies, with animals and nature and their connections to humans as a main theme, e.g., a beautiful serpentine sculpture (\$8,000) by Manasie Akpaliapik.

## antiques

### SUBURBAN RENEWAL

1 Main Street  
(914) 478-9421

**THIS DEALER AND CONSIGNMENT** antiques shop draws people from all around. It has an impressive selection of carefully edited finds, from the 1800s to the 1980s. But it is owner Fonda Lifrak

who is the real draw—she's part local therapist/design adviser/storyteller, offering snappy advice. The shop is set up in little sections: a table of assorted creamers, martini shakers and mismatched tea cups (\$8-\$24), or art deco period furniture, like armoires and a 1940s vanity with mirror (\$445), its top covered with related girly items—hand mirror, comb and brush set, old cosmetic canisters and cases, vintage jewelry, hats and gloves and a cool celluloid cigarette case (\$25). Mixed in are antique toys, furniture, fab '50s items and more.

### EVERYTHING ON WARBURTON

497 Warburton Avenue  
(914) 473-5248

#### A SERENDIPITOUS MOMENT: I

walk toward this little shop, with the sounds of a creaky recording of a man singing something 1930s; the melodic sounds waft into the street. I'm lured in and see Boris, smiling, his head tilted over a Victrola, listening, not saying a word. Besides the Victrola, owners Boris and Nevenka Knezevic sell fixtures, framed pictures and trinkets, and the couple buy and restore furniture. They're old pros, having had an Upper East Side shop for 25 years. There's a fun, musty, grandma's attic appeal to this place, full of surprises, like a hilarious portrait of a jester in a huge old frame.

### TEA IN THE ATTIC

2 Washington Avenue  
(914) 674-4590

**LOCATED ON ONE OF HASTINGS'S** infamous steep streets, Tea in the Attic, a tiny shop, is packed with vintage china and table-

Only two years old, Suburban Renewal is already a favorite consignment shop, owned by Fonda Lifrak (left) and Lisa Zaharko, who also owns Chelsea's, farther up Warburton



Arctic Artistry owner Elaine Blechman poses with a few of her Arctic art works at her unique shop

top items, jewelry, some women's clothing, hats and gloves. Everything is enticingly presented so you want it all. For example: a child's English china hunting-scene breakfast set (\$50 for 8 pieces, including plate, cup, creamer and egg cup), a complete, early 1900s Austrian handpainted china tea set (\$500) and Lusterware cups and saucers in a luscious apricot color (\$100). The shop's original wood bar and huge mirror make it a perfect stop to try things on and admire yourself. For the vintage jewelry-obsessed, the pull is primal: "I had a customer who double-parked, flew in, bought a bracelet and wore it out the door," says owner Bonnie Kranz. I know just how that fashionista felt.

## clothing, jewelry & accessories

### CHELSEA'S

541 Warburton Avenue  
(914) 478-3553

**OWNER LISA ZAHARKO'S TALENT IS NOT** only selecting fabulous, eclectic, high-quality clothing, accessories and gifts,





Retro clothes and accessories abound at Chelsea's—for moms, 'tweens and toddlers, too

Indigo (also in Chappaqua) is a one-stop shop for chic styles and accessories

which she sells at her adorable boutique, Chelsea's, but the way she focuses on the customer. In Hastings for 15 years, Chelsea's feels like an old general store, with wide plank-wood floors and pressed tin ceilings. I always find perfect gifts for 'tweens here: lanyard change purses, pendant jewelry, charm and initial bracelets. The store has a retro feel. "I try to carry things that remind me of my own childhood," says Zaharko. It also carries funky accessories and clothing for women. But for babies and little ones, it's impossible to resist Chelsea's goods (I caved in for a toddler-sized, Lilly Pulitzer-style hot pink and white dress).

#### INDIGO

546 Warburton Avenue  
(914) 478-1888

**ROAMING THE RACKS AT INDIGO IS LIKE** going through the closet of your coolest, most stylish friend, with limited quantities of carefully edited clothing and accessories: Joseph Atelier Walker's retro pop art skirts (\$99); great fitting pants

by Red Engine; Surrealist and sheer lace tight tops in hot colors; and Lilla P and Michael Stars cotton T-shirts (\$25-\$34). There's also a great selection of must-have Walker bags, Gerard Yosca pins and semi-precious stone lariat necklaces.

#### F. & D. PANVELL JEWELERS

586 Warburton Avenue  
(914) 478-3393

**DON'T COME HERE IF YOU LIKE SNOOTY** service and sleek, department store interiors. Owners Daraius and Freny Panvell are about as mom and pop as you can get. You're greeted with "Please mind the step" taped to an ancient storm door (the cottage was once a diner) and the sound of opera music. No ordinary jeweler, Mr. P., with a PhD in biochemistry, has had a long career as a medical researcher for Rockefeller University; still, he's an expert restringer and repairs seemingly anything from jewelry to watches to trays and candlesticks. He and his wife custom design 95 percent of their gold jewelry, and Mrs. P. strings and designs pearl and

beaded jewelry, and she designs and sets stones for earrings, necklaces and more. You'll find a copy of the Duchess of Windsor bracelet in 14-karat gold with rubies and diamonds for \$689, but you'll also see sterling silver earrings for \$6, plus ID bracelets and Indian ankle bracelets, and a funky vintage section of 1930s to 1950s costume jewelry.

#### FESTIVITIES

22 Main Street  
(914) 478-3621

**THERE ARE ROWS OF ANTIQUE DISPLAY** cases filled with milk chocolate and coconut haystacks (\$9.95/lb.), butter crunch (\$19.95/lb.), milk chocolate-covered raisins and pretzel poppers (\$4.95/lb.), along with Sour Patch watermelon candies and malted milk balls. But besides candy, Festivities is the place to go for baskets of all sizes and goodies to go in them: candles, sachets, tea cups, journals and photo albums and kitchen gifts including linens and cheese knives, and it is one of the best sources in the

village for bath products. Owner Taresa Caruso is a master gift-wrapper, and makes whatever you buy—little or big—look wonderful.

### THE CORSET TREE

542 Warburton Ave  
(914) 478-7446

**THE WINDOWS OF THIS CHARMING, PALE-blue wood storefront** draw you in, with a display of naughty, sweet nothings, like a sheer short robe, a see-through Marilyn Monroe-label bra and tap pants, jeweled thongs, and pale blue silk pants, with matching camisole, very Myrna Loy in *The Thin Man*. This is the rare lingerie store where service is as important as the merchandise. Owner Sandra Enfield will expertly fit you for bras, bustiers shapewear, no matter what your size or situation (post-masectomy, for example). The in-store seamstress is adorable, and, yes, they will alter with no or very little charge; you can even bring bras from home for altering. Don't be alarmed if you can't find Enfield when you first come in—the small store is piled high with boxes and merchandise everywhere. She will find what you want, from camisoles to thigh highs, merry widows to boy shorts, or a psychedelic '60s nightie, from brands like Elita, Bali, Esconte and the very hip No Romeo label.

## bookstores

### GORDON BECKHORN—BOOKPERSON

497 Warburton Avenue  
(914) 478-5511

[down the side staircase to basement level]

**THIS BOOKPERSON IS LIKE A CHARACTER** from one of the novels he sells, with a gravelly voice and one of those New England whaling captain beards. Modern literature is the shop's big focus and around 30 percent of the books on display are signed by their authors. One, for example, is Edward Abbey's first book, the 1951 *Jonathan Troy*, that you can have for \$3,250. Other interesting gems: *Hints to Those Who Would Make a Home Happy*. This \$50 book by one Mrs. Ellis, with a lovely engraving on its frontispiece, is signed, "To Miss Mary

Corning from Aunt Emily, July 1943." I sure hope Miss Mary made her home happy.

### RIVERRUN RARE BOOK ROOM

12 Washington Avenue  
(914) 478-1339

**OWNER CHRIS STEPHENS IS** full of great information on seemingly every one of the astounding number of books he has for sale. There are between 80,000 and 100,000 books: classics, history, art, photography, poetry and fiction. The backroom houses thousands of first editions and proofs. There's a lot more, including a vast collection of *cartes des visites* and vintage postcards.

### RIVERRUN BOOKSHOP

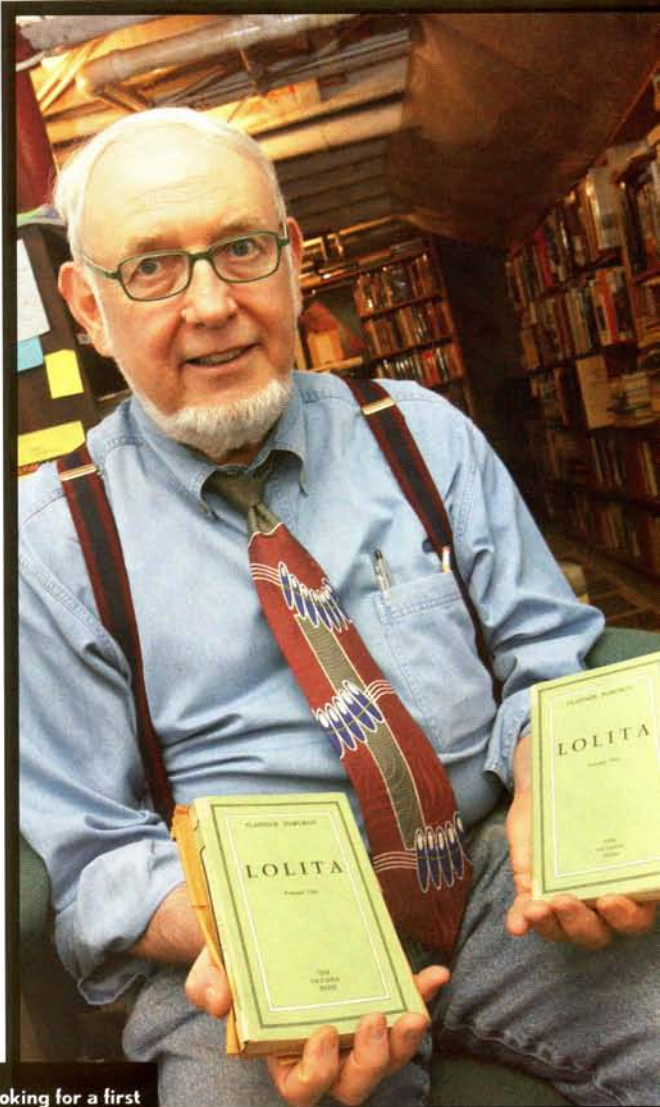
7 Washington Ave nue  
(914) 478-4307

**ACROSS THE STREET AND** also owned by Stephens, Riverrun is filled with piles and piles of used books at affordable prices. Go to the store on a Tuesday, like I did, when Stephens's mother-in-law, Mary Scioscia (wife of the store's legendary founder, the late Frank Scioscia), works. She was hosting her book group when I was there. They were all sitting in armchairs in a circle; I was free to browse around, catching drifts of their literary discussion.

### GALÁPAGOS BOOKS

22A Main Street  
(914) 478-2501

**AMADA ABAD'S CHILDREN AND FOREIGN-**language focused bookstore, which opened in 1987, is packed floor-to-ceiling with educational books and literature available in 50 languages. For example, if the need arises, you can buy *The Little Prince* in Hindi or Russian or *Harry Potter* books in Italian. Famed local children's book authors include



Looking for a first edition *Lolita*? The one that was banned here in the '50s? Bookperson Gordon Beckhorn is the man to see

Hastings resident Ed Young, whose picture books are available in English, Chinese or Korean.

### GOOD YARNS

8 Main Street  
(914) 478-0014

**OWNER ROWIE EDELMAN HAS BEEN IN THIS** vast, pressed-tin, high-ceilinged store for almost 30 years. Compared to other bookstores, it seems to have more space than books, but the staff is friendly and helpful, and, if you don't see what you want, they will order any book for you.

There's more in my little town, but I'll let you discover it on your own. Prepare to spend your whole day here and bring a full wallet. ☞

*Nancy Angiello is a freelance writer who has been living in (and loving) Hastings-on-Hudson for five years. Her articles have appeared in In Style, New York Magazine, Glamour, Mademoiselle, Bon Appétit and many other publications.*