

**TRAVEL**

## Inside NYC's New Stylish, Must-Visit Weekend Getaway

1stDibs founder Michael Bruno is now welcoming guests at Valley Rock Inn—his chic and cozy hostelry near Tuxedo Park, New York



Each historic home has been beautifully brought back to life. Bruno went all out with the property's landscaping, which feels like it's been there for years.

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Consider this before you feign that you don't have time for a weekend getaway: Driving to the new Valley Rock Inn can actually take the same amount of time it takes to get from Harlem to Tribeca in Manhattan. Michael Bruno, founder of 1stDibs, has created this idyllic little getaway in Sloatsburg, New York, which took us 45 minutes to get to from the Upper West Side via Uber. (Trains also run from Pennsylvania Station to Sloatsburg.)

Located right down the road from the private enclave of Tuxedo Park, Sloatsburg was a sleepy little town (dare we say a tad down on its luck) when in 2015 Bruno swept in to buy up a group of homes and buildings to bring his vision of a cozy inn and community to life. To date, he has purchased 25 buildings along Route 17 to work with.

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There are only four "guesthouses" on the property, known as the historic Waldron houses, which were built in the mid-1800s. Each house is exclusive to one group and is filled with treasures that Bruno has hand-selected from his personal collection. Lisa Bowles of Roark interiors worked with Bruno on the property.



Climbing roses fill this courtyard with a delicate fragrance throughout the warmer seasons.

“In December of 2016, Michael invited me up for a hike and showed me around the property. At that point, it was just dilapidated houses and abandoned cars, but I was intrigued,” Bowles said. As they continued to work on the property picking out paint colors and watching the boxwoods and trees being planted, they would have these “moments of atmosphere, where we could really see something brewing.” Bruno loves Bowles’s masculine sensibility to design, which guests can see in the burlap-lined curtains, the neutral and darker palettes of color, and the big, bold art pieces. “Michael has some seriously whacky stuff, so if a room looks boring, we just bring in one of his fantastic pieces to give it life,” she explained.



Michael Bruno didn't want guests to see unflattering drapery-lining from the street, so designer Lisa Bowles backed every handmade curtain with a compatible textile.

Bruno, who stepped away from 1stDibs in 2015, had the idea to open an inn that appealed to a younger generation. Instead of focusing on fussy things like a spa and package deals, the inn offers guided hiking, biking, kayaking, and even ice fishing, utilizing the majestic wilderness trails and lakes that surround the property from Harriman State Park and Sterling Forest State Park. Guests can come back to their little private oasis and relax in front of a massive fire with great cocktails and local food. There is also a full gym, spin room, yoga studio, and pool on the property, open to guests as well as members of the VR Mountain Club. Membership was developed to give the locals the opportunity to use the facilities year-round. They also receive special rates and priority booking on the guesthouses.

If fitness isn't your thing, there are plenty of other places to satiate your senses. As Bruno explained, "The best attributes of the area are art and nature. We are near to Dia:Beacon, Ringwood Manor (the Cooper Hewitt home), the New Jersey State Botanical Garden at Skylands (built by John Russell Pope), and Storm King [Art Center]. You can't forget Woodbury Common! I go around 7 P.M. and have the whole Tom Ford store to myself."



This barn has been left relatively untouched to keep some rustic charm on the property.

Valley Rock Inn is ingratiating itself to the community in many ways. Bruno owns organic farm fields in Chester, New York, where a host of farmers are growing fruits and vegetables to be sold at the farmers market on-site. He has also bought the abandoned grocery store built for Tuxedo Park in the late 1800s and is converting it into the Tuxedo Art and Antiques Center.

Bruno sees his property as an alternative to owning your own country house. Families can book these charming homes, spend the weekend surrounded by nature while feasting on beautiful local food, and then never have to think about changing the sheets. Luxury personified.



Bruno copied the stanchions at the Inn's entrance from his first house in Sagaponack, New York.



The cabana, supported by live oak logs, is a perfect place to meet for cocktails before dinner .



Each bedroom is outfitted with Frette linens and each headboard is custom-made by Roark Modern.



The classic vintage Saarinen table, a favorite of both Bruno and Bowles, seats 10.



This living room includes a chest of drawers from Bruno's home when he lived in France.