

# New Paltz

NEWS OF NEW PALTZ, GARDINER & BEYOND

# TIMES

ULSTER PUBLISHING • VOL. 4, NO. 32 • 75¢ • THURSDAY, AUGUST 5, 2004



# Tea for two

## NEW BUSINESS BLENDS "OLD COUNTRY" WITH NEW



Agnes Devereux in front of the Village Tea Room on Plattekill Avenue.

**T**he Village Tea Room, located on Plattekill Avenue in downtown New Paltz, promises to combine local fare with European flavor. Slated to open on August 23, the Tea Room, owned and operated by Irish-born Agnes Devereux and her husband Dan Sheehy, will serve breakfast, lunch, dinner and yes, lots of gourmet tea and coffee.

"We will open in the morning with lots of scones, muffins, yogurt and granola," says Devereux, originally from a small village in Ireland's "Golden vale." "We will also serve tea by the pot and organic, free-trade coffee."

Using local produce, baked goods and breads, the Tea Room will continue the day's fare with a host of seasonal soups and salads as well as sandwiches, quiche, fruit tarts and pies.

"The menu will really be dictated by the particular growing season," she explains. "In the summer, we would have lots of corn chowder, tomato soup, fresh basil, tomato and mozzarella sandwiches. In the winter there will be more stews and ratatouille, in the fall pumpkin soups and apple crisps and tarts."

Customers will be able to just point to what they want and then pay at the register. When the dinner hour descends, the owners will throw tablecloths over the large,

butcher-block tables and provide waiter service to their diners.

"There will be one entrée, no choices except for a vegetarian option. The chef will decide what the meal will be for the night and that is what we will offer. It will be very seasonal. I imagine many grilled items with salsas in the summer, meat stews in the winter," Devereux adds.

What the Tea Room offers that only few places in New Paltz can provide is outdoor and indoor seating as well as a special room geared towards families with children. "There are two outdoor eating areas," says Devereux. "One we will have enclosed, which will be used for casual family dining. It will have log benches and probably some toys for the kids to play with. Then we will have more romantic or business dining in the other dining room and on the outdoor patio."

The outdoor patio can seat 20-25 and offers superb view of the Shawangunk Ridge. Tall maple trees will offer shade to the second, enclosed patio which seats twelve, and then there is the historic and charming indoor dining

area that will be brimming with the scent of various teas, coffees and homemade desserts.

"When strawberries are overflowing at the local farm stands, the Village Tea Room will celebrate the season with strawberry tarts, strawberry rhubarb pie and strawberry mousse... When the chill of fall gives way to winter snows, guests will be comforted by rich beef stews, organic lamb pies, heaps of buttery mashed potatoes, gingerbread and hot chocolate with homemade marshmallows," Devereux notes.

The 200-year-old structure on Plattekill Avenue was recently renovated and is now having the final touches put in place. Although it changed over time from a tailor shop to an electronic shop and eventually to apartments in the 1970's, its historical character is still largely intact. "There are several hand-hewn beams that we have saved and restored and will use as decoration," says Devereux, who lives next door with her husband and two tow-headed young children in what is commonly referred to as "The old Fairweather house."

After working as an interior designer in Manhattan for many years, Devereux and her family decided to move up to New Paltz because of its "diversity, its beauty and its history."

Devereux herself has come full circle. "My story begins in a small village at the foot of a mountain in rural Ireland," she says. "My parents had a hotel and before home births were fashionable, I was born in room number nine. Ireland's hospitality is world famous and our life revolved around our guests, many of whom came back year after year from all corners of the world... and now I am back in a small town at the foot of a beautiful mountain. And here too I want to entice guests with a homey aroma of delicious food and old fashioned hospitality."

The Tea Room will be open Tuesday through Sunday from 8 a.m. to 10 p.m. [with the last dinner order able to be made by 10 p.m.]

— Erin Quinn