

HILLSIDE SCHOOLHOUSE, UPSTATE NEW YORK

This renovated, 19th-century schoolhouse is set deep in the Catskills, yet it's only two hours' drive from Manhattan. Owner Bronson Bigelow has done a brilliant job converting the classic clapboard structure, which includes a steeple, into a two-suite guesthouse, expertly riding the line between historic charm and contemporary cool. The enormous, open-plan ground floor is decked out with an eclectic mix of antiques and salvaged coffee tables, long chesterfields, a dining table with Tolix chairs and vintage bookends crafted by Bigelow himself (the latter are for sale, note the discreetly dangling price tags). Board games, a piano and a turntable with vinyl all tune in the old-school vibe (not to worry, there's an iPod dock, too). Upstairs, choose between the Belfry Suite – which affords a peek at the cast-iron school bell through a glass window in the ceiling – and Room 1893, named after the year the Schoolhouse was built. Spacious and light-filled, both have king beds, lovely views of the surrounding woods and white-on-white bathrooms that have been spruced up with stag-print wallpaper. There's no restaurant, so pick up provisions in Barryville, just a few miles away, and make use of the properly equipped kitchen in the original cloak room. Book both rooms and hole up with your gang. +1 845 557 8565; www.hillsideschoolhouse.com. Doubles from about £135

