

COMPLIMENTARY JUNE | JULY 2018

ORANGE

MAGAZINE

SUMMER **SIZZLE!**

An insider's guide to fairs,
festivals, food and fun

Pleasures and treasures
at consignment shops

Downtown Port Jervis
enjoys a renaissance

PORT PRIDE

Meet **Cooper Boone**,
a key player in
Port Jervis' renaissance



Brianna Krupunich at Foundry42+ coffee bar, where customers can also enjoy baked goods.

STORY BY **TIMOTHY MALCOLM**
 PROVIDED PHOTOS BY **MIKE BLOOM**

Cooper Boone has several titles. He's a theatrical performer, a musician, a psychologist, a writer, a furniture salesman, a chef, a father and a guy from whom you can rent a beautiful Catskills farmhouse. But above all, he's a man about town.

It seems Boone was born to make fast friends with everyone he meets. So after an interview at Foundry42+, the business he owns with partner Mark Veeder that serves many roles – shop, community space, café, concert venue – Boone walked about his town, the City of Port Jervis. And he showed, in about 30 minutes through four conversations, that Port Jervis is changing.

"There's such a treasure trove of jewels, of people and of skills, that I continually discover and it just blows my mind," says Boone inside his Front Street shop established in 2016. "As a result of that, this massive renaissance that's happening right now is so grassroots and organic and so cool."

Originally from rural Minnesota, Boone

discovered the area about 20 years ago, falling in love with the Hawk's Nest and wanting to stake his claim in the mountains nearby. He didn't have money for a house, however, so he bought nine acres of land and camped. For years he was doing a little bit of everything, from psychology

to performance to cooking, then decided three years ago that it was time to fuse those facets of his life into one building.

Foundry42+, which started as a furniture store but evolved immediately, is a former gym that required 18 dumpsters during demolition. The rich, dark brick building looks somewhat out of place in a Port Jervis that's just beginning to dramatically flip, but walk inside and you can see the potential of these structures throughout the

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— Cooper Boone



The exterior of Foundry42+ at 42 Front St. in downtown Port Jervis.



Celebrity chefs
elegant meals in
upstairs room.

BELOW: Home
ings are placed
throughout the retail
space with many
produced by the
foundry42 team.



city. A standard café area with bar stools, a long timber table and benches, and smaller tables and chairs provide a warm welcome. Beyond that is a long gallery of furniture made across the country, curated lifestyle and food products, plus coffee table items like books. There's a ton of space here, and you can imagine spending hours here.

That's the intention, of course. Boone wants freelancers, businesspeople, students and parents trying to decompress to walk in, order some coffee and sit wherever. The living room furniture is fair game, and you can buy it if you like it so much. Or you can buy a Dirty Jerz – the café's trademark beverage of chai, dark brew and dark chocolate – and work at a table. Whatever.

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Upstairs is a loft that can host concerts, workshops and community gatherings. There's a morning children's storytime on Wednesdays and Saturdays, miniature



ABOVE: Upstairs is an events room that can host classes, musical events, kids' parties, Sweet Sixteens, reunions and weddings.

RIGHT: Boone and partner Mark Veeder prefer an open kitchen plan in their homes, complete with a huge island to help people create food together.



wellness retreats, open mic nights and reserved parties. For storytime, kids lay out on a large pillowed area underneath the loft's massive windows that look out to Front Street. From here you can see the changes taking place.

Boone points to a boutique hotel that will occupy the other side of the street, the vegan-leaning restaurant Fogwood and Fig inside the once dangerous 24-32 Front St. building, the comic and gaming mecca Haven For Heroes, the new Fox N Hare Brewery and the two other lifestyle businesses starting up alongside Foundry42+: Bungalow 37.

Nothing is competition, he says; instead, he welcomes anyone who wants to be part of the renaissance.

He walks outside and talks about the work done by developers, businesspeople, politicians and city leaders. New sidewalks are being installed. Soon a bunch of tall trees will be planted along the street. To the left is a new fountain, the center of a new Graeb Point promenade with benches. Buildings nearby are being fully renovated.

It's been a long time coming. Around 1994 or so is when businesses began closing in the downtown area, says Maria Mann,

councilwoman in the city's 2nd ward and owner of The Gun Lady, a shop directly across from Foundry42+. The Gun Lady has been in operation since 1992, a lonely survivor that's finally seeing positive change.

"I was tired of being down here by myself," says Mann, who approached Boone last year about starting a local business group. Thus, the Historic Downtown Merchants Association of Port Jervis was born. Its members meet to discuss what residents and tourists want, how to improve the downtown, how to promote their businesses and how they can work together to deliver the best outcomes. "We're working together. Each business is promoting something different."

How true it is. Boone walks over to Mann's shop, then heads to Adam's Juice Bar to chat with owner Adam Schoch. "Did you get the email about the next meeting?" Boone asks. After walking outside he's immediately met by a developer who talks about his current work at a large building at Fowler Street and Jersey Avenue. A few minutes later he's at the fountain at Graeb Point chatting with the Department of Public Works employees about the new centerpiece.

You can see what it might look like in a year - heck, by summer: parents strolling babies from shop to café, young professionals meeting for a beer before getting back to work, folks taking a lunch break at a bench under a tree, tourists checking into the hotel after a day of hiking in the Catskills or at Delaware Water Gap National Recreation Area.

That's the vision Boone has for Port Jervis, and it's one reason he's fallen in love with the area. He and Mark have two homes: an 1866 farmhouse in Shohola that he rents out, and a property in Forestburgh where they raise their twin 3-year-old daughters. He frequents local markets and farms, bringing Freedom Hill Farm's milk to Foundry42+, for example. He hopes more people visit the region and Port Jervis and find what's been "forgotten," as he says.

"The through line that we have always said about this town is there's great bones. That there's really something fundamentally right about it," he says, summing up the words of all the friends he's made over three years in Port Jervis and 20-some years in the area. "It just needs shining."