

Guidebook: Great Houses

MID HUDSON

Wilderstein

<http://www.wilderstein.org/>

330 Morton Road
Rhinebeck, NY 12572

Hours: Open May through October, Thursday-Sunday
12:00-4:00.

Notes: Group tours available by reservation only. Call
ahead or visit website for special events.

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Historical Description: In 1852, Thomas Holy Suckley, a descendant of the Beekman and Livingston families, purchased the river front site. Suckley named the property "Wilderstein" (wild man's stone) in reference to a nearby Indian petroglyph. The original Italianate villa designed by John Warren Ritch was remodeled and enlarged in 1888 by Thomas's son Robert Bowne Suckley and his wife, Elizabeth Philips Montgomery. Poughkeepsie architect Arnout Cannon was hired to transform the two-story villa into an elaborate Queen Anne style country house. New York City decorator, Joseph Burr Tiffany, designed the interiors. Until 1991, three generations of Suckleys occupied Wilderstein.. The books, letters, photographs, furniture, paintings, art objects, and china, are intriguing. Miss Margaret Lynch Suckley, the last family member to live in the house, served as archivist in the FDR Library, she worked closely with President Franklin Roosevelt. She was with FDR when he was fatally stricken at Warm Springs, Georgia in 1945. Shortly after her death, her diaries and the letters that she and Roosevelt exchanged were found. In 1983, she donated the house and 35-acre grounds to Wilderstein Preservation, a not-for-profit educational corporation. Active since 1980, the organization is dedicated to preserving and interpreting the architecture, interior design, collections, landscape, and natural open space of this significant site. Listed on the National Register of Historic Places, Wilderstein is a major feature of the Hudson River National Landmark District.

The Site: Visitors will learn about Queen Anne architecture, view the original interiors of the Suckley home, and expand their understanding of the connections among the "River Families." Group tours are welcome daily by reservation. One hour should be scheduled for touring the house and an additional half-hour should be allocated for visiting our gift shop, strolling the grounds, and enjoying the spectacular views.

Directions: Take the New York State Thruway to exit 19. From the center of Rhinebeck, proceed south on Route 9 to first right, Mill Road. Turn onto Mill Road, East, and proceed 2.2 miles to Morton Road, (County Route 85). Turn right onto Morton Road and proceed one-quarter mile. Wilderstein entrance is on left.