



everyone. “I am trying to fill as many needs in 2,500 square feet as I can,” Leuschel declares as he lays out his stocking strategy of “basic stuff at a great price” with natural food options, European and specialty gourmet options, as well as local products rounding out, what he views as, a winning trinity. As is evidenced, right next to the can of Maxwell House Coffee is a bag of Peet’s Coffee sharing shelf space with a bag of J.B. Peel Coffee roasted locally in the neighboring town of Red Hook.

On the premises there is a full-service butcher by the name of Ken Roberts. Leuschel likes to joke that Roberts came with the lease, as he used to work the butcher counter at Central Market before it shut down. In addition, Culinary Institute alumna Fairlight Whritner is the resident pastry chef and baker, dutifully churning out muffins, scones, pies, specialty cakes to order, as well as a few of Leuschel’s trusted family recipes, like his grandmother’s apple crisp. And for a supreme dose of nostalgia, the place is ornamented with vintage tin signs from the 30s and 40s advertising long forgotten staples like Bond Bread and Hood Milk. A visit to Otto’s, where one is encouraged to linger over a cup of joe and casual chat with a neighbor, is a far cry from the mundane chore of striking items off your weekly grocery list.

—E. Steinman

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## OTTO RECOVERY

Germantown is a respectable, but sleepy, little township on the southwestern edge of Columbia County. It is devoid of excessively quaint boutique shops as well as any unsightly strip-malls; it is a remarkably unremarkable Hudson Valley town. But last December, Otto Leuschel, a former vice president at Whole Foods Market who had initially entertained the idea of raising chickens, opened his namesake market in what used to be the abandoned Central Market space on Main Street. With this, new life had sprung at the start of a frigid winter.

Otto’s Market serves as a measure of fresh energy in the depths of a wintry economic climate, as Leuschel, and his loyal staff, tap into a general store character while providing a bit of everything for



Photographs: Kara Thurmond