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Summer 2007

CAPE COD LIFE PUBLICATIONS
display until SEPTEMBER 11, 2007

\$5.99US \$6.99CAN



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Suited to a T.

A terrific team of three creates a West Falmouth beauty.

BY MARY GRAUERHOLZ - PHOTOGRAPHY BY TOM SOBOLIK

Summer Solstice, the longest day of the year, is the purest day of promise. In a single day, the sun climbs to its celestial high, and spirits—especially for those who live oceanside—respond to the call. Suddenly the ocean is warm enough to play in. Sunshine feels delicious on bare skin. Dinner al fresco is a memory to warm the soul on a cold winter night. It is also the time when the West Falmouth seascape, sun glinting off blue water, is at its most beautiful. Everything carries a note of optimism.

Sandra and Kevin, Cape Cod summer residents for years, knew this, of course. They love the high season, and everything that comes with it—visits from their two grown daughters, their extended families, and Sandra's close circle of girlfriends.

So it's no wonder they wanted — *really* wanted—to move into their new summer house, overlooking Little Sippewissett Marsh and a West Falmouth beach, by the eve of the Solstice, June 20. But it was fall 2005. Who but the most naïve would think that a three-story house, constructed with the finest materials and exquisite craftsmanship, could possibly be ready by June 2006?

Enter a terrific team of three, who accomplished the near impossible to see that Sandra and Kevin could spend an entire summer in their new house.

Sandra, an interior designer, knew what she wanted. She also knew that the answer lay in a crackerjack team. She hired builder Ed Tarca of E.W. Tarca Construction in Hopkinton and architect John Dvorsack of Falmouth, who worked in overdrive on the project. In nine

This West Falmouth home enjoys expansive views of ocean and salt marsh.

OPPOSITE, TOP: The homeowner, Sandra, with Toby, one of the couple's two West Highland terriers.





short months the family's dream house was born, 6,000 square feet of luxury and comfort wrapped in soft beach palettes and nautical accoutrements.

Both Tarca and Dvorsack felt a kinship with Sandra and a professional respect for one another. "There was reciprocating relationship with all of us," says Tarca.

Dvorsack credits good communication and Sandra's expert decision making for finishing the plans. "The biggest challenge was the compressed time schedule," Dvorsack says. "But Sandra and I worked together very well. She knows how to make a decision, and she doesn't look back. When you're on a schedule, that's what you need."

Tarca says of Sandra, "We have a very common bond and familiarity. It was very easy for me to accomplish what Sandra likes." Still, he adds, "It was a very aggressive schedule." A typical crew on any one day might have included 10 painters, 14 carpenters, 10 landscapers, three people laying tile, six cleaners, one plumber, and six electricians.

"There were a lot of people working every day," Tarca continues. "And they were working in unison. We went from plastering to moving in furniture in two months." The most complex project, and perhaps the biggest satisfaction, was the construction of





the master bedroom, Tarca says, where he placed timber peg beams in the ceiling and built in a curved dresser and bed.

Dvorsack recalls in awe the accomplishments of Tarca and his crew. "I've never seen anyone finish a house that detailed in that short a time," the architect says. "It was extraordinary—very high-level work."

The home's most prized characteristic is its location, on a grassy knoll overlooking Little Sippewissett Marsh and, from another angle, a West Falmouth beach.

Dvorsack reveled in the location. "I tried to take advantage of the views," he says. "The

The living room window is a porthole to views of the sea, while the oak, maple, and cherry woods throughout the home are the same hardwoods as those used in boats.

"My husband wanted an ocean front home, so I gave him an anchored ship," says Sandra of the home's interior design, which evokes a fine yacht. "Everything I chose for the home, I chose with that in mind." Sandra looked to beach stones for the home's color palette. In the kitchen, TOP, sea greens and sandy golds create a warm seaside space.



ABOVE: Architect John Dvorsack of Falmouth worked with builder Ed Tarca of E.W. Tarca Construction in Hopkinton, MA, to build the home in just nine months, in time for the summer season. Decks feature stainless steel railings and mahogany caps to give the feeling of being on a boat. OPPOSITE, TOP: The spokes of the dining room chandelier echo the spokes of a ship's wheel, says Sandra, the homeowner and interior designer. BOTTOM: The master bedroom features crisp, airy tones and panoramic ocean views.



living spaces are all oriented to take advantage of the water view, Buzzards Bay. The marsh view is beautiful. It's always changing."

The house is filled with reflections of its seaside location. Enormous windows open up both living floors to sunshine and the ever-changing natural landscape. As Sandra says, "You don't want to give up a view if you don't have to." The floor plan is also open and expansive, building on the openness of the outdoors. The rooms on the first floor flow gently one to the next, joined in mood by soft color palettes in greens and blues, and nautical touches in construction details and interior design. The second floor holds Kevin's office and the bedrooms, including a master bedroom with a writing corner for Sandra and the beautiful built-in mahogany bed by Tarca.

"My intention was for it to feel like a very fine yacht," Sandra says. So she chose just three types of wood for the home interior: maple, mahogany, and oak, "what one would find on a boat."

Tarca and Dvorsack used construction details to carry the nautical theme, such as a panel on an obelisk in the family room that calls up a lighthouse, bathroom tiles with undulating waves, and beadboard in the fashion of an old Cape Cod beach house. (Including ceilings and wainscoting, there are 11,000 linear feet of beadboard in the house.) The water-facing decks on the first and second floors have stainless steel railings with a mahogany cap that give the feeling of being on the edge of a boat.

Sandra and Kevin found other ways to accessorize with ocean-themed touches, such as shell knobs on the kitchen cabinets and an English dining room table with inset brass nautical stars and tulipwood trim. On the staircase to the second floor, creamy walls hold white-on-white shadowboxes and shell collections.

"I try to make my spaces intimate," Sandra says. "I love to put in detail where people wouldn't ordinarily find it."

This is the family's summer house; winter is spent mostly in the Boston area. Sandra, an interior designer for more than 30 years, finds herself being drawn to art. "My love of art is calling me," she says. Her home has a lovely collection of art, from a sculpture by her daughter in the family room (there is no formal living room) to oil paintings in the dining room and kitchen by father and daughter artists, Ken and Sandra Wakeen. Ken Wakeen lives in Falmouth in the summertime.

Both Tarca and Dvorsack liked combining the challenges of working on a grand scale and incorporating a more casual style. As Tarca says, "This is a more laidback approach, a more informal house. It's about vacationing, having friends over, casual living."

The third floor is simply an observation deck, which the family calls the sunset deck. Dvorsack designed it so that on the Summer Solstice, the corner of the deck points directly to the setting sun. The architect adds, "The setting sun on the Solstice coincided with the completion of the project."

FOR MORE INFORMATION, SEE MARKETPLACE ON PAGE 130

Mary Grauerholz is managing editor at Cape Cod Life Publications.

The master bedroom's dramatic custom built-in cabinets were designed by Sandra with architect John Dvorsack, and built by Ed Tarca.



