

by Matthew Power



Photo: Casey Cronin

# Out of the Blue

Bridgehampton, New York



SETTLED AT THE END of an 800-ft. dirt driveway, in the center of a wild, treeless meadow, this vernacular farmhouse could have dropped from the sky, swept up from some Kansas prairie. The combination of clapboard and board and batten siding, gabled garage and wraparound porch suggest a homestead of distinguished vintage, but the finishes look rich and new, even a year after completion.

"The siding material was cedar, which is hard to paint in the first place," says builder Frank Dalene of Telemark Construction. "I went out to research different types of finishes, and found Schreuder paints—they're imported from Europe. The thing that impressed me was that there was a 10-year manufacturer's warranty—which is phenomenal for our area. We used the paint

The low, east-facing mud room (above), with its small windows suggests a farm chicken coop. On the rear of the house (right), banks of double-hung windows lend detail to the traditional open porch, all finished with premium paints.

Photo: Mario Novak





The owner chose bold finishes throughout the home, and presented the builder with a color chip for matching. Walls are framed with 2x6 dimensional lumber and no interior vapor barrier—Dalene believes a house should breathe. The Kolbe & Kolbe windows include both standard and custom units.

as both primer and finish coat, with a first coat thinned down with mineral spirits. It still looks like the day we put it on.”

The emphasis on finishes carried through to the 4,165-sq. ft. home’s interior, notable for bold, striking colors throughout. The client, a well-known fashion designer, originally from Germany, made finish selections with punctual precision.

“He understood that decisions had to be made definitively and quickly,” Dalene says. “He gave me a whole schedule of paints, identified each room, ceiling and walls, gave me a color number and attached a chip. It made my job so much easier.”

#### MINIMAL IMPACT

Architect Craig Lee says these clients initially wanted to restore an older home in the Sag Harbor area of New York, rather than build new, but became discouraged by the homes they visited. The old homes needed too much work, they decided, both for the initial renovation and continued upkeep.

“They came to me and said ‘we want a white clapboard house,’” Lee recalls. “Then they found this fifteen-acre site that had been farmland in a prominent farming area. My client spoke to the four surviving sisters. They were concerned about developers moving into the area. He reassured them that he would put no more than two houses on the property.”

Carefully sited for the Northeast region, the home’s front door faces north, with the two-car garage/barn situated on the northeast corner of the plan, shielding living areas from the yearly Nor’easters. At the west end of the house, a squared-off “silo” contains a lower floor study, with a sitting room on the second floor. Stacked fireplaces (for a total of four) on both ends of the house allow for wood heating in all primary living areas.

The clients also insisted on the look of a dirt driveway. Dalene cleverly used and reused soils mined at the site to create “marl,” a mix of clay and sand. “We needed



#### PROJECT

COMPLETION DATE: June, 1996  
 TIME TO COMPLETE: 9 months  
 FIRST FLOOR: 1,904 sq. ft.  
 SECOND FLOOR: 2,261 sq. ft.  
 TOTAL: 4,165 sq. ft.  
 OTHER: two-car garage,  
 covered porches  
 COST PER SQ. FT.: \$130  
 BATHROOMS: 4 1/2  
 BEDROOMS: 3

Main Level

Photos: Mario Novak



Photos: Mario Novak

Low-moisture pine built-ins have a “colonial maple” finish, the same color the clients wanted for the floors. The kitchen (bottom, facing) includes a custom copper range hood, Viking cooktop and Sub-Zero refrigerator.

to trench from the road for utilities and electric cable,” he explains. “First, we excavated topsoil from driveway, then mined out sand and clay from the 4-ft. trench. We separated the clay from the sand and used it to create the marl base for the driveway. The whole thing saved us about twenty-thousand dollars.”

#### MADE TO ORDER

Telemark’s carpenters created all trim and built-ins on site using No. 2 pine, stained in a warm tone. The floors, also of pine, feature the same finish. Dalene face-nailed them with wrought head iron nails, after predrilling for every penetration. He used only pine with a moisture content of 8 to 10 percent for all of the home’s trim, to ensure greater stability.

Other custom features include a handsome pine staircase, with a hand-finished rail, and a site-built mantel in the living room.

“We tried to duplicate an antique finish on the mantel,” Dalene says. “We used a wax with a stain color in it. Those fireplaces are also interesting. They were supposed to be sheetrocked. The mason was a German who was very skilled. He and the owner got along fabulously. He became very upset when the owner decided to leave his rough work exposed. He wasn’t happy with the rough finish. He expected it not to show. You see that kind of personal involvement in European craftsmen.”

Dalene’s crews also fashioned the carriage-style garage doors on site, starting with a standard flush garage door, then adding cosmetic details.

“All of the home’s shutters also are custom-made,

with old-fashioned hinges,” Dalene points out. “They’re primed and painted on both sides.”

#### ‘LITTLE THINGS’

In many ways, the home’s interior reflects the clients’ love of boating—close, intimate spaces, with subtle decorative details.

“We were trying to build this home within a budget,” the architect notes. “We wanted it to look traditional, but not like a reprint. I had to make a house with some expression without big moves. We did that with little things, like putting X-brackets on columns, with the natural wood.”

The home’s final polish reflects the close working relationship between architect, builder and client. Recalls the builder: “This client understood that a custom home is only built once, that there is no perfection to a work in progress. Because he understood that, we were able to do our jobs and deliver him a very fine product.” ■



**BUILDER:**  
Frank Dalene (*top*)  
Roy Dalene (*below*)  
Telemark Construction  
Bridgehampton, New York



**ARCHITECTURE:**  
Craig Lee  
Lee Architecture, P.C.  
Sag Harbor, NY

#### ENVELOPE

**STRUCTURE:** Douglas fir  
**SIDING:** clear cedar clapboard  
**ROOFING:** CertainTeed  
**INSULATION:** Owens-Corning  
**PAINTS/STAINS:** Schreuder (Fine Paints of Europe), Benjamin Moore (interior), Minwax (interior stain)  
**WINDOWS/PATIO DOORS:** Kolbe & Kolbe  
**INTERIOR DOORS:** Morgan  
**DOOR/WINDOW HARDWARE:** Baldwin, Gainsborough (knobs)

#### MECHANICAL/ELECTRICAL

**HVAC:** Lennox (both furnace and a/c)  
**HUMIDIFIER:** Sprilaire  
**CENTRAL VACUUM:** Vacuflo  
**LIGHTING:** Halo, Decora  
**STAND-BY GENERATOR:** Generac

#### KITCHEN

**REFRIGERATOR/FREEZER:** Sub-Zero  
**OVENS/RANGES:** Amana  
**COOKTOP:** Viking  
**SINKS:** Kohler  
**DISHWASHER:** Asko  
**FAUCETS:** Harrington  
**CABINETS:** Quaker Maid  
**COUNTERTOPS:** Wilsonart

#### BATH

**FIXTURES:** American Standard, Kohler  
**FAUCETS:** Jado  
**TUB:** Renovator’s Supply  
**SHOWER ENCLOSURE:** Midland  
**COUNTERTOPS:** Wilsonart  
**TILE:** Sri Lanka

#### OTHER

**WASHER/DRYER:** Maytag  
**WROUGHT FLOOR NAILS:** Tremont Nail  
**FLOORING:** Eastern white pine