

Better Homes and Gardens

# TRADITIONAL HOME

June/July 2004

## Welcome to the Weekend

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An award-winning producer's weekend home is a

The view from outside Sandy Gallin's living room takes in the boathouse, the outdoor seating and dining area and fireplace, and some of the site's natural plantings.

BY ELIOT NUSBAUM PHOTOGRAPHY BY TRIA GIOVAN  
PRODUCED BY BONNIE MAHARAM

natural fit in the Hamptons.

# a Sandy Gallin production

White walls and ceilings and dark-stained old plank floors imbue the living room with a cool, relaxed atmosphere. A wall of French doors opens onto a veranda overlooking the grounds. Furnishings in the room are a mix of new and antique.

**Opposite bottom:** Sandy Gallin and his beloved Boston terriers—Mickey, Darin, and Vegas.





“The process of building a home is very much like directing a film,”

claims Sandy Gallin. And who are we to argue with the award-winning producer? Especially considering how his most recent production, a weekend home in the Hamptons, turned out. If they gave a prize for home design, he might very well have been honored again—he won an Emmy for a remake of *The Minnie Worker* and was executive producer of the Oscar-winning documentary *Common Threads: Stories from the Quilt*.

Sandy's career as agent, producer, philanthropist, and personal manager has spanned nearly 40 years (starting with booking the Beatles' first American appearance on *The Ed Sullivan Show* in 1964). He has managed the careers of Michael Jackson, Dolly Parton (with whom he formed Sandollar, the production company behind *Common Threads*), Cher, Whoopi Goldberg, Joan Rivers, Lily Tomlin, Richard Pryor, Mariah Carey, and Neil Diamond, to name a few. Among his production credits are more than 20 films, including *Father of the Bride* and *Father of the Bride, Part II*. And his television credits include two series, *Buffy the Vampire Slayer* and *Angel*.







Not surprisingly, Sandy has lived on the West Coast for the past 30 years. For 15 of those years, he has been searching for the perfect piece of land to build on in the Hamptons in his native New York. He found it in a 14-acre parcel bordered on three sides by sensitive wetlands under conservation management. "This is the way the Hamptons must have looked 100 years ago, and yet it is just 2 minutes from the ocean and 1 minute from town," he says. "I fell in love with the land and had a vision of what it could be."

As any good executive producer would, Sandy assembled his troupe of talented players—architect Scott Mitchell, interior designers Bill Lane and K.C. McCook, builder Bob Plumb, and landscape designer Jane Lappin—who shared his vision for the home and set about bringing the ideas to reality. And what a delightful reality the property is.

**Left:** The strongest design component in the dining area is the nearly ceiling-high firewood rack, which was Sandy's idea. The table and chairs and hanging light fixture are antiques. **Above:** The kitchen, which opens onto the living room, is anchored by a marble-topped island. The pot rack is an antique wood bed frame. Reclaimed wood beams, beadboard walls, and painted cabinets give the room character.



The front entry hall offers a light-filled welcome. Like the rest of the house, it is furnished in English antiques, including an 18th-century dresser base and high-back bench. The rug is an antique Samarkand. **Left, clockwise from top:** The view down the library hallway toward the back staircase. ■ A 19th-century French chinoiserie bench dominates the library. ■ Photographs of Sandy's Boston terriers, taken by Herb Ritts, line the stairwell.





**Left:** An iron bed made from old fragments is a Giacometti-like sculptural touch in the guest room and offers a sharp contrast to the rustic antique carved barn bench. The charcoal drawing by April Gornik depicts the view from the bedroom window looking over the pond. **Clockwise from near right:** An antique partner's desk provides a quiet place to work in the master bedroom. The barrel chairs are French and the bench is Regency. ■ A collection of photographs in burl wood frames decorates the powder room. The burlwood chair is an antique. ■ The powder-room vanity is an 18th-century Welsh dresser base. ■ Exposed plumbing gives a period, country feel to the master bathroom.

The project began with a site plan created by Sandy and Mitchell. They then collaborated on the landscape design with Lappin, whose practice is in the Hamptons and who was therefore able to guide the plan through the strict conservation regulations that had to be followed in the choice of plant materials.

The plan for the grounds included adding a two-acre pond with a filtration system and putting in indigenous plant material around the pond and across the property. "Sandy had a clear vision of what he wanted—that when you arrive on the property you have no idea that the house and much of the landscape is new," says Lappin. "The focus of the landscape was to be a natural-looking pond. It had to be in harmony with the surroundings and fit perfectly into the natural landscape."

The plan for the house and outbuildings called for razing an existing two-story structure (which had been built within the past 50 years), building a new house on the pre-existing footprint, and adding a new boathouse on the edge of the pond. But the most intriguing feature of the plan has to be the 60-foot-long swimming pool positioned at the edge of the pond and elevated some 24 inches above the pond's surface.

The design of the house was based on the historic architecture of the area. The idea was to re-create the look of an 18th-century Long Island farm, says the architect. "The intent of the design was to create an unpretentious sense of grandeur that takes its appeal from harmony with nature and the structural expression of wood and fieldstone," Mitchell adds. "The materials and





construction methods attempted to mimic those used by Long Island farmers over the past several centuries." Those materials were primarily limited to clear red cedar shingles and fieldstone for the exteriors. Reclaimed barn wood was used for the interiors of the boathouse and for the truss structures in the main house. Flooring was selected from material harvested from the threshing floors of various barns.

The interiors were a collaboration among Sandy, Mitchell, Lane, and McCook. McCook, whose firm has worked on something like 30 projects with Sandy, says: "We were all inspired by the beautiful landscape of the area and wanted to produce an atmosphere that felt as though it had been on the property for a long time." The look they went with reflects a relaxed mood—what McCook calls "refined ease"—befitting a weekend getaway. Most of the rooms are furnished with 18th- and 19th-century English antiques, looking as if they might have accumulated at the house over time. "We were also enthusiastic about juxtaposing our selections of old-world and primitive pieces against the background of pristine, crisp, and clean walls and surfaces," adds the designer. "The overall interior is meant to invite one to relax comfortably while

still remaining stimulated by a fresh and younger approach to a traditional interior."

The boathouse, which also does double-duty as a guest cottage, has a semi-attached pergola that functions as an outdoor seating and dining area. The focal point of the 24-foot-square area is a large-scale fieldstone fireplace opposite the guesthouse. The whole open-grid top of the pergola will eventually be covered with wisteria as the landscaping continues to fill in. It's an ideal spot for Sandy and his guests to relax and enjoy the view of the pool and pond.

Lappin, the landscape designer, sums up the project best when she describes the house and grounds as being "as beautiful now as they will be 100 years from now," and promising, "As the years go by, it will continue to age gracefully." ■

**Architect:** Scott Mitchell

**Interior designers:** Bill Lane, K.C. McCook, and Scott Mitchell

**Landscape designer:** Jane Lappin

For more information, see sources on page 172.



**Above:** The most dramatic exterior element is the raised swimming pool, which has blue stone walls and coping around its top. The pool actually was built before the pond. Two families of ducks have taken up residence in the man-made pond. **Top left:** A stone fireplace is the focal point of the sitting area under the pergola off the boathouse. **Right:** The design of Sandy's house, seen here from the rear, was inspired by historic Long Island farmhouses.

