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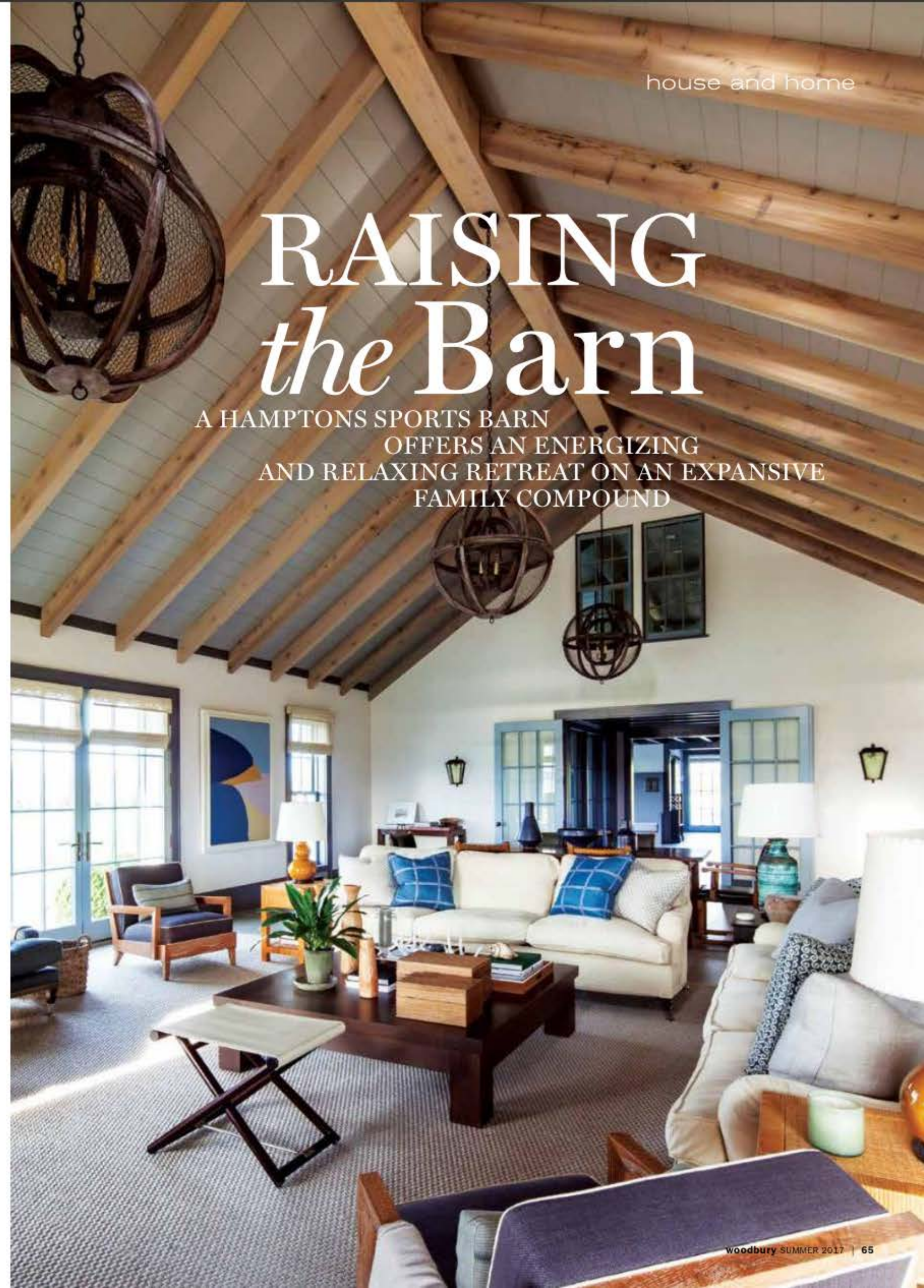
BY ALLISON WILDERMUTH
PHOTOS BY NICK JOHNSON

A sports retreat, its structure inspired by a potato barn, has areas for relaxing and entertaining as well as exercising.

house and home

RAISING *the* Barn

A HAMPTONS SPORTS BARN
OFFERS AN ENERGIZING
AND RELAXING RETREAT ON AN EXPANSIVE
FAMILY COMPOUND



house and home



The main area of the barn serves several functions: eating and entertaining spaces double as work areas; a cobblestone path and a bluestone ramp, both lead to the entrance of the barn.

house and home



S

ome of the most luxurious structures are rooted in the humblest of origins. In the case of one couple seeking to create a year-round getaway for its multigenerational family out East, the ultimate retreat arose from what was once a potato field. And one of the most delightful buildings on the property, the sports barn, derives its name and inspiration from the spuds that were once harvested on the land.

Unlike other large Long Island land parcels that have been subdivided, this 20-acre property, which includes a pond and a protected six-acre agricultural preserve, belongs to a single owner who had outgrown a vacation retreat in Sagaponack and wanted plenty of room for four generations to spread out, have fun and celebrate the holidays. The site includes a main house, pool house, garage and the sports barn, with room to grow. The property provided a "once in a lifetime opportunity to envision a single compound," said architect Kevin Clark, a principal at Historical Concepts, an architectural firm headquartered in Atlanta with an office in Manhattan. The firm has worked in the Northeast for nearly 15 years and is also currently working on a master planning project for the Hampton Bays downtown, so it is familiar with the lay of the land.

IT WAS MEANT TO BE LESS REFINED AND MORE RELAXED THAN THE MAIN HOUSE

Nonetheless, the sports barn concept was a new one for Clark, the architect admitted. When asked to define a sports barn, he described it as a retreat from the main house where the family can exercise, play and relax. It was a key part of the compound design, he added. A synthetic surface tennis court lies just outside the rear door. Inside the three-story, 8,500-square-foot structure there is a pool, a sauna, a steam room, a treatment room, a gym and a locker room. There is also office space and, because the sports barn can double as a party barn, it has a vaulted sitting area, a catering kitchen and plenty of room for entertaining.

Designer Steven Gambrel of S.R. Gambrel Inc. in Manhattan, who created the interiors of the sports barn said the concept created a compelling guest house experience by combining the living space, office space, sports space and party space around the guest quarters. "I have worked on a few similar projects but none that has such a unique hybrid of uses as this one," he said.



Some of the sporting amenities around and within the sports barn include a tennis court, sauna, treatment room, lockers, and the architect's favorite, an indoor pool lit by a skylight.



THE MAIN FLOOR IS WHERE THE FAMILY GATHERS TO RELAX AND ENTERTAIN

While the main house was built in the classic American cottage style, Clark said he wanted the sports barn to be "a step down from that," utilizing an agrarian concept. Situated roughly 250 feet from the main house, the sports barn arose from an empty field surrounded by farmland, and Clark's first thought was "classic Hamptons barn." Although no barn existed on the property, it served as the inspiration for the building. "It was meant to look like it could have been on the property," said Clark. "We wanted it to be obvious and connected, that it was part of the master plan but also far enough away [from the main house] to be a real retreat." Just as the original farmers would have built the main part of the barn and then extended it as needed for food storage, the sports barn has a main central mass and a telescoping wing that can continue to grow as the family does. The exterior is done in a classic barn style, with random width, board-on-board siding that will weather well, and floor to ceiling windows and big sliding doors on its front and side entries. "We wanted the building to appear as an agrarian structure, in hopes of disguising its scale in the landscape," Gambrel said. "It was meant to be less refined and more relaxed than the main house so it could be enjoyed in a variety of ways."

In the front of the barn on the lower level is the 50 foot indoor pool, which was dug into the ground like a potato cellar. "The pool is a unique and cool space," said Clark, and is his favorite feature of the sports barn. Because it is sunken into the stone floor, the pool doesn't overwhelm the space, he said, while a skylight that runs the full length of it provides plenty of light and welcomes swimmers even in the wintertime. That is a key point of differentiation, according to Clark. Most indoor pools are part of a glassed in, conservatory-like setting, he said, which can seem cold and remote when there is snow on the ground. This pool is warm and inviting year-round. On the same level are a spa area that includes the sauna/steam room and the treatment room with a massage table. The floors on the pool level are made of slate as part of the "wet zone," Clark said, while the floors on the other levels are wood.

The main floor is where the family gathers to relax and entertain. The homeowners wanted to divide the barn into separate zones so the kids could have their fun and the adults could have their peace. The tennis courts and the pool are the loud and wet entertainment areas; the



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POCKET DOORS THAT RESEMBLE BARN DOORS CAN CLOSE OFF EACH INDIVIDUAL OFFICE FOR PRIVACY

sauna and steam room offer a Zen-like retreat; and the main living area provides a calm and quiet place to read, entertain and work. An upper dormer space houses a gym, while a locker room on the main level accommodates all athletes and exercisers.

The sitting room sports a beachy vibe with a vaulted, beamed space made from light-stained wood along with overstuffed couches in light-colored fabric, a textural rug, and large wood and metal orb pendants hanging from the double-story space. Gambrel complemented the clients' existing pair of slipcovered sofas, dining and coffee tables with vintage finds, including a pair of Bielecky Brothers wicker side tables; three mid-century modern nesting tables and Las Palmas chairs, all in cerused oak (a technique by which white lead or paint fills the pores in a piece of wood to accentuate the grain); a large ceramic lamp by Design Techniques and Martz ceramic lamps. There are also six additional vintage chairs upholstered in black leather. The gray sisal area rug, sofa and chair pillows, and matchstick blinds are all custom-made. Gambrel accessorized the room with Arteriors wooden vases, a Lillian August industrial studded side table and Serena & Lily baskets.

The sitting room doubles as an eating area with a simple wood table and chairs on one end (the tables can double as a work space for meetings). French doors on the other end of the sitting room lead to a series of three offices set up railway-style under a low, sloping ceiling in contrast to the vaulted space before it, which makes the workspace "feel like it is tucked into this nook," Clark said. Pocket doors that resemble barn doors can close off each individual office for privacy or open to create one long open space for large meetings or gatherings.

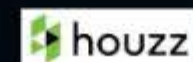
The kitchen is used mainly for parties and get-togethers, and it is set off from the rest of the house with sliding doors. "We wanted it to be as efficient as possible," Clark said, explaining the long galley space and the long center island, topped with honed calacatta marble, ideal for laying down platters of food and drinks or simply making a sandwich. There is grey and white custom cabinetry, a farm sink, two ovens and beveled grey subway tile from Ann Sacks lining the walls, bridging the gap between a utilitarian space and a family friendly room, and, like the rest of the barn, conveying a laid back and relaxing feel. ■



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