

Dan's Papers

VOLUME XIII / ISSUE 9

BEHIND THE HEDGES

HAMPTONS REAL ESTATE & LIFESTYLE...STEP INSIDE

THE DIFFERENCE IN THE DETAILS

MICHAEL DERRIG
SEES WHAT
OTHERS MISS

REAL ESTATE AGENT COMES FULL CIRCLE

MENTOR GAVE HER A START
IN REAL ESTATE, NOW SHE IS
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8



12



16



18

Contents

HAMPTONS & PALM BEACH REAL ESTATE & LIFESTYLE...STEP INSIDE

8 REAL ESTATE ROUNDTABLE

With the unofficial start of summer having arrived, a panel of Hamptons agents weighs in on renter preferences, pricing trends and the 2026 season's biggest surprises.

12 BEHIND THE HEDGES COVER STORY

Michael Dering, the founder of Landscape Details shares how a passion for craftsmanship grew into three thriving Hamptons design and construction companies.

16 FULL CIRCLE LISTING

Kalen Raynor of Daniel Gale Sotheby's International Realty is selling the East Quogue home of her late mentor Jim Cumisky of Quogue East Realty, who gave her a start in real estate at the age of 19.

18 MEANWHILE IN PALM BEACH

Bridgehampton-based Saunders & Associates and Palm Beach-based Premier Estate Properties have formed a new partnership linking the Hamptons and South Florida markets.

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REAL ESTATE ROUNDTABLE

Agents Take the Pulse of the Summer Rental Season

The Hamptons rental season is well underway. To gauge the market's pulse, we asked local agents how the rental season is going so far. Has anything surprised you about this year's rental market? For instance, are renters booking later? Are landlords adjusting expectations? Which types of properties and where in the Hamptons are attracting the most interest?



Sarah Minardi of Saunders & Associates says this modernized summer cottage at 5 Hook Pond Lane in East Hampton offers a rare and exclusive seasonal retreat.
Courtesy of Saunders & Associates

Mala Sander **THE CORCORAN GROUP** **SAG HARBOR**

We saw strong rental activity very early in the season, with many tenants securing full-season, two-month, and one-month rentals well ahead of summer. One surprise was the relatively limited demand for short-term rentals for the U.S. Open at Shinnecock timeframe. Many homeowners anticipated a surge in premium-priced weekly rentals tied to the event, but I wasn't surprised that demand failed to materialize - it rarely does. As in the sales market, the rental properties attracting the strongest interest are those that combine desirable amenities, turnkey condition, and realistic pricing. Waterfront homes, village locations, and properties with pools continue to generate the most demand and tend to rent first. We're seeing some landlords adjust their approach as the season progresses. Owners who initially wanted one tenant for the full season or for July-Labor Day are becoming more flexible on both timing and pricing to capture demand from tenants still looking for shorter or more customized rental periods, with the two-week minimum rental period in mind.



Kieran Brew **SERHANT.** **BRIDGEHAMPTON**

The Hamptons are dead, long live the Hamptons!! Last year was a tough year for rentals, no doubt about it and lots of people had pretty much written the Hamptons off as an "over". This was not the first time I've heard this in my career. But reality is the Hamptons never goes out of style. Last August, there were no empty houses in the Hamptons. This year, things have been quite different. A lot of my houses booked up early and a lot of my tenants locked in early as well. Right now, I'm trying to find a house in Montauk with a very healthy budget, and finding really slim pickings right now. I'm trying to find a house in Montauk for a client with a very healthy budget, and finding very slim pickings.



Sharon Stern
SOTHEBY'S
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In my experience, renters generally fall into two groups. The first group knows exactly what they want: they plan their summers well in advance and move quickly and early to secure the right property. The second group is more flexible when it comes to home size, location, and layout, but more sensitive to price. They are often unsure of their exact dates, so their decision-making tends to happen later in the season. This year followed the same pattern, though the timing shifted slightly. Although the long winter pushed rental showings back by several weeks, demand this spring was strong. When it comes to property types and locations, preferences vary widely by client. What is consistent, however, is what renters pay attention to: the overall freshness of the home, whether a first-floor primary or guest bedroom is needed, and, more than ever, the appeal of the outdoor living space. A covered patio or an ample number of umbrellas, comfortable outdoor seating, and a great gas grill are expected. Well-designed, furnished, and landscaped outdoor spaces have become a defining part of what makes a rental truly attractive.

Joe Van Asco
DOUGLAS ELLIMAN
MONTAUK



The Hamptons rental market remains strong and extremely active, but I have noticed renters shopping with more confidence this year. They're taking their time, comparing options, and looking for the best combination of house, location, and value. There are always people booking late—those with flexible schedules, changing summer plans, or the luxury of waiting—and I continue to see rental activity right through the end of August. The city gets hot, people want to be near the ocean, and plans evolve, so demand remains steady throughout the season. It's fun, and I'm always receptive to getting things done quickly. For landlords, expectations depend on the property, location, price point, and competing inventory. Sometimes patience pays off and results in a stronger rental price; other times, waiting can mean missing the opportunity altogether. The properties generating the most interest continue to be walkable, recently renovated homes with designer furnishings that are priced competitively within their market.

Matt Breitenbach
COMPASS
SOUTHAMPTON



I was always concerned about the rental market. I kept getting calls from clients who would run into agents at events or dinners, aggressively pushing their U.S. Open listings at high prices and promising the market would be great. That led to a lot of tough conversations about pricing and expectations. What surprised me in 2026 is how much more inventory there is. I had prepared my team for a heavier season, but we're seeing close to twice as many homes for rent. Part of that is the U.S. Open, but the bigger shift is how New Yorkers use the Hamptons now. It's become more of a country town than a resort town. People are based in and around New York year-round or full-time, and they capitalize on the prime summer months by renting in July or August, sometimes while they travel to Europe or elsewhere, or move to an additional home they have in the Hamptons. I have clients with two or three homes, and some are buying another to live in over the summer while they rent out their primary. The market is so competitive because of all the new construction built and bought over the last 10-plus years. Those are the homes people want. Big homes, lots of bedrooms, luxury amenities, new construction within the last decade. They'll always rent well as long as they're priced correctly. The hardest segment right now is shorter-term rentals. You get crazy dates and unrealistic expectations on homes. Technology has made Hamptons rentals feel too much like booking a hotel or an Airbnb for my taste.

Sarah Minardi
SAUNDERS & ASSOCIATES
EAST HAMPTON



Over the last several years, we've seen the Hamptons purchase market shift from being primarily price-driven to much more lifestyle-driven. That same mindset is now shaping the rental market. I think the rental market in 2026 has become less about renters looking at what's available and more about people saying, "Here's how I want to live this summer. Now show me what fits that vision." Renters are coming in with very specific ideas about location, layout, privacy, outdoor space, wellness amenities, entertainment areas, guest suites, and even the overall feeling of the home. My rental portfolio has grown over the years, but it has also remained consistently active because many of the homeowners have continued investing in their properties and paying attention to what renters care about. Many now include outdoor living spaces, exercise and wellness rooms, entertainment areas, and separate guest accommodations. It has also made my job more interesting because I sometimes reach out directly to homeowners who had not intended to rent, simply because I have someone looking for a property exactly like theirs. People are increasingly willing to pay for the lifestyle they know they want, and flexibility around timing is becoming part of that equation.

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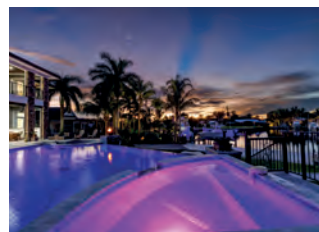


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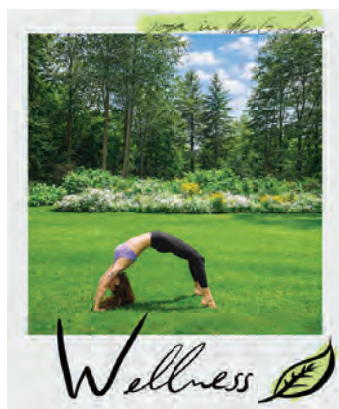


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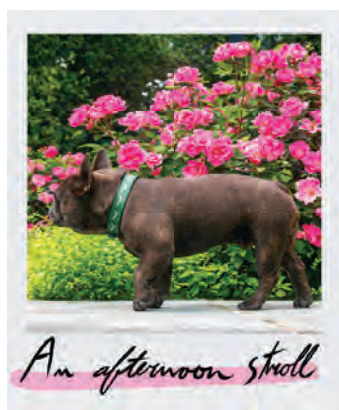


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Shingled pool house with a Lautner edge pool featuring a willow archway: exquisite collaboration between Landscape Details, Building Details and Pool Details

Photos by Anthony Crisafulli

The Difference Is in the Details

Michael Derrig Has Built a Successful Hamptons Design Firm by Seeing What Others Miss

By Bernadette Starzee

Long before Michael Derrig began building homes throughout the Hamptons, he was a determined 10-year-old boy in his basement, teaching himself woodworking techniques with a circular saw and a do-it-yourself book. By age 14, he was laying brick patios for his family, friends and neighbors. By age 18 he had his own home improvement business with a focus on landscaping.

Those early experiences sparked a lifelong passion for building and creating. Over the years, that passion grew into a career centered on helping clients realize their vision, crafting homes and landscapes that work in harmony and reflect their lifestyles, aspirations and connection to their home. Through a commitment to quality, thoughtful design and a genuine love of the building process, Derrig has spent decades transforming ideas into exceptional homes while earning the trust of clients throughout the Hamptons.

Today, Derrig is the visionary behind Landscape Details, the successful East Hampton full-service landscape design and construction firm that he es-

tablished in 2000. Years later, he opened Building Details and Pool Details. The three interconnected companies collectively shape some of the East End's most extraordinary estates.

For Derrig, success is not only about the big picture. It has always been about the finer points – the subtle choices of materials, textures, colors and proportions that transform a property from simply attractive into something unforgettable.

"It's all about the details for me; I see things other people don't," he says. "All the little details add up to one big, beautiful project."

Building a Vision

Captivated by the natural beauty of the East End, Derrig moved out to the Hamptons and founded Landscape Details with just three employees in a 10-by-7-foot office. Since then, Landscape Details has expanded into one of the East End's most sought-after full-service landscape architecture companies, employing more than 200 people, including landscape designers, irrigation and lighting specialists, stone masons, arborists, garden designers, and teams of maintenance and construction specialists. Reflecting the family atmosphere that Derrig has cultivated over the decades,

the office includes his four dogs who regularly accompany him to work – three Jack Russell terriers and an English cream retriever. Three of his original employees are still with Derrig today, as is his very first client.

"Our firm has grown because of our relationships, our attention to detail and our unparalleled commitment to realizing each client's vision," Derrig says.

Landscape Details quickly earned a reputation for sophisticated, highly personalized landscapes that balance architecture, ecology and artistry. Derrig's aesthetic was influenced in part by legendary 20th-century landscape architects such as Thomas Church, Dan Kiley and A.E. Bye, whose modern yet naturalistic approaches continue to influence his work.

A graduate of Rutgers University's Landscape Architecture program, Derrig honed his skills by designing landscapes for ballparks, zoos and college campuses early in his career before bringing his talents east.

Derrig begins every project by listening carefully to his clients.

"A lot of owners need help honing in on what they want," he says. "They have a lot of ideas and

imagery, and it's our job to put those thoughts into a program and create a design."

For every property, Derrig and his team conduct a careful site analysis, taking into account soil conditions, sun and wind exposure, proximity to the ocean, drainage and other factors that will impact the design.

"To have a successful landscape, you need a well-thought-out plan," Derrig says.

Beyond Landscaping

Not long after coming to the Hamptons, Derrig built his own residence in order to save costs. As his landscape architecture business grew, Derrig developed a deep appreciation for how people live within and connect to their surroundings. That perspective naturally led him into homebuilding, where he found the opportunity to bring together architecture and landscape as a single, cohesive vision creating homes that feel both beautiful and deeply connected to their setting.

At the same time, he found that clients increasingly wanted a single trusted source to oversee every aspect of their outdoor environments. What began as landscaping evolved naturally to include masonry, structures, irrigation, lighting, maintenance and, eventually, custom home construction and pool design.

"It was a natural transition," Derrig says. "We'd be doing the landscaping, and the client might ask if we knew a good pool builder, or someone who could repair the driveway or maintain the property."

About five years ago, Derrig officially launched Building Details, his custom home-building division, and Pool Details came along about three years ago. Prior to starting the pool division, Derrig frequently subcontracted pool construction. Bringing it in-house gave him greater creative and quality control.

Today, the three companies collectively provide nearly every outdoor and structural service imaginable, from custom homes, patios and pools to meditation gardens, outdoor kitchens, stone restoration, drainage systems, fences, lighting and even bespoke greenhouses and flower farms.

The Hamptons Aesthetic

Derrig's eye for scale, color, texture and composition has made his work especially sought-after in the Hamptons, where discerning homeowners expect timeless elegance and exceptional detail.



Above, a cedar-shingled pool house with antique bluestone fireplace and outdoor living space, by Building Details. At right, a cutting garden by Landscape Details with David Harber sculpture.

Landscape Details sources rare materials from around the world, such as antique bluestone and imported cobblestone. Derrig also established his own 25-acre tree farm in Calverton, where specialty trees and hedges are cultivated years in advance to ensure superior quality and uniqueness.

"I wanted control over what was being planted," he says. "We shape the trees the way we want and get them to where they're spectacular."

Among the many notable estates Landscape Details has designed, Derrig is especially proud of two recent projects.

One involved a longtime client for whom Derrig originally built a home on spec nearly 20 years ago. More than a decade later, when the neighboring property became available, the client asked Derrig to create a new residence on the second property and a new landscape. The result was a striking architectural juxtaposition: the original home, deeply traditional in style, paired with a new, ultra-modern structure next door.

"The landscape integrates the two homes seamlessly, and they function together as one compound," Derrig says.

Another standout project spans an extraordinary 11-acre estate on Lily Pond Lane in East



Hampton. The property, which includes a century-old residence renovated by a renowned architect, features magnificent mature trees.

"It has the most beautiful mature trees in all of East Hampton – London plane trees, copper beeches, Norway maples, black walnuts," Derrig says. While preserving the mature trees, Landscape Details completely reimagined the grounds, installing gardens, roads, gates, a pool and a spectacular pond.

"It was one of the most fantastic projects we've ever done," Derrig says.

Wellness and Lifestyle

As lifestyles evolve, so do landscape designs. One of the biggest trends Derrig sees today is wellness-focused outdoor living. Clients increasingly request saunas, cold plunges, meditation gardens, vegetable gardens, greenhouses and spaces designed for relaxation and restoration.

"We're seeing more cutting gardens and vegetable gardens than ever before," he says.

Padel courts have also become enormously popular in the Hamptons, reflecting a broader shift toward active, social outdoor environments.

"We create spaces that people can enjoy with their family, their dog, their friends," Derrig says. "It's super-rewarding to walk on a property after it's finished and seeing people using the house, the pool and the property the way it was intended."

For more information about Landscape Details, Building Details and Pool Details, visit <https://landscapedetails.com>, <http://buildingdetails.com> or <http://pooldetailseh.com>; call 631.329.3000; or email landscapes@landscapedetails.com.

PARTNER CONTENT

Multi-acre East Hampton Village estate with specimen trees, by Landscape Details



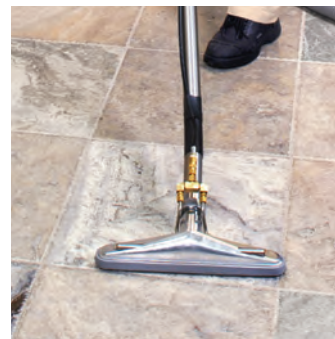
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Agent Returns to Her Roots With Mentor's East Quogue Listing

Kalen Raynor of Daniel Gale Sotheby's International Realty is selling the home of the late Jim Cumisky, who gave her a start in real estate.
Daniel Gale Sotheby's International Realty

By Arlene Gross

At the rather young age of 19, Kalen Raynor got her start in real estate working for Jim Cumisky at his mom-and-pop agency, Quogue East Realty.

"I walked into the office, and he said he would hire me, and I was full-time in college, and I worked there full-time, too," says Raynor, a sales manager for Daniel Gale Sotheby's International Realty.

Following Cumisky's death this past winter, Raynor is now selling 517 Montauk Highway, his home/office in East Quogue, where he raised four sons, right next door to 521 Montauk Highway, the office where she'd worked for him.

The circa 1890 house is listed for \$1.399 million.

Learning the Right Values

On her very first day working for Cumisky, Raynor actually sold her very first home.

"Someone walked in and Jim's like, 'You're up,'" Raynor says. "And then I got hooked after that."

Originally, she started as an agent, but over her 12 years at Quogue East Realty, Raynor worked her way up to office manager.

Raynor recalls Cumisky as a wonderful boss and mentor.



Agent Kalen Raynor
Daniel Gale Sotheby's International Realty

"After a few years, I met my husband, eventually got married and had two children," she says. "He would let me bring my first daughter there – I had

a playpen next to my desk – full time. I was known as the realtor with the baby for many years."

An old-fashioned kind of guy, Cumisky worked with a Rolodex and a binder full of properties.

"Eventually, I convinced him to get computers and then we got onto MLS," Raynor says. "Because he was so old school, I learned the true old school way to do the business. And that's actually how I run my offices now."

Above all, Cumisky instilled in her the values she's held throughout her 26-year real estate career: to be honest, hardworking and always to do the right thing.

In 2012, Raynor decided to open her own office, Ponquogue Point Properties in Hampton Bays, where she worked for eight years, until she got the opportunity to manage Daniel Gale's Westhampton Beach and Bay Shore offices, as well as their satellite office on Fire Island.

Despite her considerable success, Raynor never forgot her roots and her unwavering dedication to the man who gave her her start in real estate.

After Cumisky's death, she posted on Facebook, "He was a kind, intelligent man who deeply loved his sons and was endlessly proud of their success. While I hold a degree in graphic design, I chose to stay in real estate, working alongside Jim for 12 years — years that shaped not just my career, but who I am."

Cumisky and Raynor came together again for one last transaction in July 2024, selling the old Quogue jail, which had become a commercial property: She was the listing agent; he represented the buyer.

“He said, ‘This is like a full 360 moment,’” Raynor recalls.

Coming Full Circle

A few years back, Cumisky closed his office at 521 Montauk Highway and started running his business out of his home, using two front rooms for his offices.

“When he passed away, the kids called me and said, ‘There’s no one else that can sell this house. We want you to do this,’” Raynor says.

The 2,830-square-foot cedar-shake shingle home features a wraparound porch, four bedrooms, four bathrooms, and hardwood floors, including wide-plank floors on the second floor. Off the kitchen is a breakfast nook with a built-in wooden bench. The third-of-an-acre property has a brick patio and an in-ground, kidney-shaped pool.

As his family grew, Cumisky outgrew the house.

“So, in 2001, they put the extension on,” says Raynor, noting that they used that as a living and dining room. “And above that, they built a primary bedroom.”

Despite the additions to the home, Cumisky didn’t make major changes to the interior, which still has its original farmhouse kitchen sink, wooden floors, and an antique wood staircase off the kitchen. A second curved banister staircase off the living/dining room was part of the 2001 addition.

“He would write ‘character of days gone by’ in a lot of the listings,” Raynor says, adding that despite the updates to Cumisky’s home, it retains that character from the past.

Zoned for hamlet office zoning, the property can be utilized as a two-family dwelling, a place of worship, a park, a playground, and a museum, among other uses.

Located right on Main Street in downtown East Quogue, the home is close to restaurants and shops.

“It’s actually a perfect location because you’re a couple of miles from the Ponquogue Bridge; you’re a couple of miles from the Quogue Bridge. So, you’re kind of in the middle to get to the south end beaches,” Raynor says.

Coming full circle – selling Cumisky’s home next door to where she first started out in real estate – does not portend the end of Raynor’s ties to her mentor.

“He taught me everything I know and really how to do the business the right way,” says Raynor, who uses these principles in her current work, training, mentoring and guiding agents. “It’s old school: you’re honest and fair with your clients, you follow the laws, you keep up to date on the market and the activity, and just truly try to be the best realtor there is.”



Jim Cumisky died in December 2025 at the age of 74 after a lengthy battle with cancer.
Courtesy of the Cumisky family

Meanwhile... In Palm Beach

Hamptons Meets Palm Beach in New Luxury Real Estate Alliance

By Taylor K. Vecsey

Two ultra-luxury real estate powerhouses in the Hamptons and in South Florida are newly aligned. Saunders & Associates and Premier Estate Properties have formed a strategic partnership that connects two of the most coveted luxury destinations.

The two firms will share listing information and opportunities among agents at the respective firms, with listing information promoted in both markets and presented directly to agents on both teams, according to a statement. Both firms will also establish referral opportunities, create joint networking events and gatherings so that agents can tour properties, build relationships, and expand their market connections.

“Premier Estate Properties was a natural fit because both firms are independently owned boutique luxury brokerages built around high-touch service, deep local expertise, and long-standing relationships with high-net-worth clientele,” Steve Glick, Senior Vice President of Advertising and Marketing at Saunders & Associates, tells *Behind The Hedges*. “Both companies dominate their respective coastal luxury markets while maintaining a highly curated agent network and concierge-level approach. There is also a strong synergy between the Hamptons and South Florida markets, with many clients owning or seeking homes in both destinations.”

Saunders & Associates, based in Bridgehampton, is the largest privately owned and operated real estate brokerage firm in the Hamptons with more than \$25 billion in sales and rentals. President Andrew Saunders founded the firm in 2008 on the principle of “A Higher Form of Realty” and boasts 200 top-tier agents who represent a significant number of exclusive listings and complete a substantial share of Hamptons transactions. In 2025, Saunders & Associates executed more than \$1.5 billion in transactions from Westhampton to Montauk.

Premier Estate Properties, formed in 1993, is the only brokerage dedicated to the marketing and sale of Florida properties exclusively in excess of one million dollars. Brokers-owners Gerard P. Liguori, Carmen N. D’Angelo Jr., and Joseph G. Liguori lead the company with sales exceeding



The leaders behind the new alliance: From left, Joseph G. Liguori, Carmen N. D’Angelo and Gerard P. Liguori of Premier Estate Properties, and, Andrew Saunders of Saunders & Associates. Photos courtesy of Premier Estate Properties and Saunders & Associates

\$22 billion. It has a diverse \$2 billion estate portfolio along Florida’s East Coast and seven coastal offices in Boca Raton, Palm Beach, Delray Beach, Vero Beach, and Fort Lauderdale. “Premier Estate Properties consistently outperforms companies many times its size, with only 50 top-tier agents,” the statement says.

Together, Premier Estate Properties and Saunders & Associates are hoping to redefine what it means to serve the luxury real estate market.

“This alliance creates a seamless connection between two of the country’s most important luxury coastal markets. Many affluent buyers and sellers today are highly mobile and often split time between the Hamptons and Florida,” Glick explains. “By aligning the firms, clients now benefit from expanded exposure for their properties, direct access to trusted market experts in both regions, and a more connected referral and advisory experience. It allows us to better serve clients wherever their lifestyle and real estate interests take them.”

Always focused on building meaningful relationships and strategic partnerships that enhance their client and agent experience, this opportunity stood out thanks to what Glick calls “a strong cultural alignment between the firms and the com-



plementary nature of the two markets.”

He continues, “Rather than pursuing growth for the sake of scale, the focus was on finding the right partner that shared the same philosophy of service, professionalism, and market specialization.”

In addition to sharing listing opportunities, referral relationships, and market intelligence directly with one another, listings from each market will be presented to agents across both organizations in order to create broader visibility and networking opportunities, says Glick.

Asked if this partnership reflects a broader shift toward boutique luxury firms joining forces to compete with larger national brands, he responds: “Yes, there is a growing recognition that independently owned boutique luxury firms can often provide a more personalized, knowledgeable, and connected experience than larger national brands. Partnerships like this demonstrate that boutique firms do not need to sacrifice their identity or local expertise to achieve meaningful reach and influence. Instead, strategic alliances allow firms to maintain their independence while offering clients expanded market access, stronger referral networks, and highly specialized service across multiple luxury destinations.”

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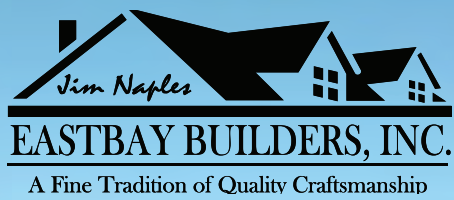


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