

# HCG&G

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## SIXTH ANNIVERSARY ISSUE!

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A DECORATOR'S SECRET GARDEN

# QUICK-CHANGE ARTIST



KERRY DELROSE OUTFITS A SAG HARBOR LANDMARK IN LESS THAN 30 DAYS  
BY JORGE S. ARANGO | PHOTOGRAPHS BY FRANCES JANISCH







**Park and Swim** | Before designer Kerry Delrose's client asked him to redo her Sag Harbor home, the previous owner, builder Bob Tortora, converted a portion of the three-car garage into a pool house (PREVIOUS SPREAD LEFT). **Home Work** | In the living room, a steel and glass desk from Ralph Lauren Home (PREVIOUS SPREAD MIDDLE) is paired with a leather chair from Mecox Gardens to create a small office area. **One-Stop Shop** | Lauren offered enough variety for Delrose to outfit the living room (PREVIOUS SPREAD RIGHT) so it doesn't look like everything came from the same place. **Good Neighbors** | The 1927 house (ABOVE) is only one of three in town with a candlestick fence. **Field of Dreams** | Sunflower-filled wood pots from Mrs. MacDougal (RIGHT) brighten the kitchen table. **Iron Chef** | Tortora's 2004 renovation included a kitchen (OPPOSITE) so well done that Delrose added only a set of stools from Fuber's Antiques. See Resources.





Were speed decorating an Olympic event, Kerry Delrose of Thom Filicia Inc. would certainly lead the U.S. team. After all, he's passed the qualifying trials. Last spring, a few weeks before Delrose was to leave for an extended project in Australia, a 44-year-old investment banker client for whom he'd designed two other residences called to say she'd bought a house in Sag Harbor she wanted him to outfit.

"She closed on the house in March, moved in with a box spring and mattress in April, and I finished the house on May 6 or 7," he recalls breathlessly. "It's called, 'How to do a house in under 30 days.'"

So, how did he do it? For starters, Delrose had great bones to work with. Built around 1926, the house had been somewhat of an oddity on Main Street. "It's the only one that didn't look like it belonged on Captain's Row," he says, referring to the street's colloquial nickname. With white stucco and a roof of red asphalt shingles, "It looked more like it belonged on a beach in Santa Barbara."

In fact, for years Bob Tortora—the local builder and realtor who bought and renovated the property in 2004—referred to it as "the *Mommie Dearest* house" because of its curious West Coast personality. However, as everyone knows, appearances can be deceiving. Under the red asphalt Tortora discovered an original wood-shingle roof, which he re-shingled. He also spruced up the exterior with new stucco, rewired, overhauled plumbing





**Museum Quality** The dining room's original wood paneling (white pine) was finished with tung oil. The space is enhanced with a round table from Ralph Lauren Home's New Bohemian collection and a circa 1930s French antique bronze and glass chandelier from a Paris flea market. **Rub a Dub** Delina complemented the home's original antique tubs (opposite top left) with a metal storage cabinet from Ruby Beet. **Sea Goddess** The master bedroom (opposite top right) is large enough to include a sitting area. The headboard and bed skirt fabric is made from Scalamandier's Neptune's Treasure fabric. The Ralph Lauren crystal lamp is from Fisher's Antiques. **Out of the Blue** The deep navy guest bedroom (opposite bottom right) evokes a marine feel. The matching curtain and bed skirt fabric is Ralph Lauren's Nautical. The headboard is a custom design with a chrome tack trim. See Resources.





and refurbished the original weighted windows. ("Every pane of glass was taken out, the wood cleaned up, then the panes replaced," Tortora says.) Save for the original plaster walls and whatever moldings and floors were salvageable, the interior had been gutted and renovated, complete with a new kitchen so well done, says Delrose, "It was like a gift with purchase."

Delrose knew the impossibly abbreviated schedule called for one- or two-stop shopping. For most of the furnishings he tapped Hinson & Company (where he'd been design director for years) and Ralph Lauren Home, which offered enough styles that he wouldn't run the risk of the décor looking like it all came out of the same box. In this sort of situation, explains Delrose, "You go to the places you know will have stock. I walked through [the showrooms] like Sherman through Atlanta." He filled things out with items from Crate & Barrel and such favorite local shops as Ruby Beets in Sag Harbor, Mecox Gardens in Southampton and Rumrunner Home in East Hampton.

The client had also retained some possessions: an original Angelo Donghia sofa that landed in the master bedroom, a collection of Lalique fish (now "swimming" in a custom Plexicraft box in the upstairs office) and nautical oil paintings. The latter, says the client, an avid sailor, were bought from dealers in Denmark,







Holland and Italy. "Some date back to the 1800s, others I suspect are reproductions," she admits. "But I bought them because I liked them—not for their resale value." Besides, she was after casual comfort, not pedigree. "I wanted the house to be warm, relaxing and welcoming. While it's beautifully done, I wanted people to be able to put their feet up. I have two dogs and they certainly put their feet up!"

That was the only directive Delrose's client gave him. Through their two previous projects together, the relationship had evolved into a trusting friendship. "He did some sketches and we met for a drink at Café des Artistes in the city to look at some fabrics," she says. "That was the extent of our consultation. His taste is impeccable and I completely trust him." The process thus streamlined, Delrose was able to conjure an environment that reflected the client's love of a life on the water without resorting to cliché. "You could fall into that trap very easily," says the designer. "You know, the oars-on-the-ceiling thing."

Despite this synergy, however, the whole project might have stalled had Delrose not pulled together a great team of vendors and tradesmen (including David Martinez of Stitch in Brooklyn, who did all the upholstery and drapery work). "Not one thing went wrong," Delrose says, happily. "Everyone not only stepped up to the plate, but went beyond." It was a team effort for which Delrose was the captain. ●

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**Smooth Operator** "His taste is impeccable," says the homeowner about interior designer Kerry Delrose (ABCNY), who completed the makeover in less than a month. **How Dry I Am** When the designer had trouble finding a fabric to cover the pool-side chairs (RIGHT), he chose a white terry cloth that he found in Manhattan's garment district. "It's like having your own built-in towel," he says. See Resources.





