

Inspiration Blooms

INVENTIVE TOUCHES TO A CAPE COD HOME
LEAD TO A SUCCESSFUL BUSINESS

By Julie Craven Wagner

Twenty years ago, Peter and Marsha Malone were like many young families who looked forward to the occasional weeks and regular weekends when they could escape to their small cottage on the Cape. Peter who at the time was a financial executive at a high tech company in the Boston area, and Marsha who was busy raising three kids in South Natick could never have envisioned the journey their life would take over the next couple of decades. It all started on a wintry Sunday as the northeast braced for a snowstorm. Marsha, filled with wistful visions of warm Cape Cod days, made a call in response to a real estate ad for a Harwich Port house within walking distance to the beach. That call resulted in

the purchase of an old sea captain's house on Sea Street in Harwich Port.

Little did Peter know that the updates and improvements he made to their Sea Street home would lead to a new career. One of the first tasks involved replacing all of the windows in the home with larger ones to capture the spectacular view. Peter stood back and remarked to Marsha, "Something is missing. Windows need shutters." Marsha was bemused, but Peter retreated to his wood shop in the carriage house at their home in South Natick and crafted a full set of shutters for their new Cape home.



Opposite: Peter and Marsha Malone at their Harwich Port home on Sea Street. Portrait by Paige Biviano. Above: Peter and Marsha's daughter, Lauren, with their two grandchildren. Photos by Jim Goodnough.

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Once again, he stood back and considered his project. The shutters still felt unfinished. With a little ingenuity, Peter crafted a Cape Cod catboat to adorn the panel of each shutter. Finally he was content.

It wasn't long before people on their way to the beach would stop and ask where the Malones had purchased their shutters. The first time he was asked, Peter replied, "Seaport Shutter Company," prompting a surprised look from Marsha. Her surprise grew when he continued, "I manufacture them." Given the state of the high tech industry at the end of the '90s, it was only a matter of time before the Malones committed to focusing on their new Cape Cod business.

The acquisition of a historic gas station on Route 6A in Brewster became the foundation of the business. Peter refers to the launch of his business as one of their many "Chardonnay-induced decisions." Peter and Marsha discussed what Marsha's role might be in the operation. She mused, "Well, I love antiques, and I love everything nautical....what if I open a store and we call it Nautique!" At the end of her first summer with the store, a client came in and asked Marsha to come to her house and give it the "Nautique-look." Marsha exclaimed, "I have a look!"

As both businesses found success, it opened up more opportunities.

Marsha's interior design business, Nautique, deftly creates seaside flair for homeowners across the region. Peter's company, Seaport Shutter, welcomes you home with his many unique doors.



"You never know where life is going to lead you, you just have to enjoy the ride."

Below, Peter and Marsha share their home with their extended family including their three Springer Spaniels, two of whom, Shabby and Bridget are pictured below.



In 2012 Lauren Huard, the Malone's eldest daughter joined the business. One day the family found themselves relaxing on the big grassy front yard, but without the right chairs—and so another product was born when Peter created the first Seaport Shutter Classic Adirondack Chair. Another inspiration from the Sea Street house was an attempt to recreate the nostalgia that comes from the pitter, patter of happy bare feet in summer followed by the thwack of the screen door. Hence, the creation of the ever popular Seaport Shutter Company's mahogany screen doors.

For the Malones, the time spent with their expanding family that now includes two grandchildren (with another on the way in 2018) is what makes all of the hard work worth the effort. "The house on Sea Street," Marsha says, "was the catalyst for everything that followed. That moment that Peter so naturally stated that we are Seaport Shutter Company, we manufacture these shutters, everything crystalized. You never know where life is going to lead you, you just have to enjoy the ride."

Julie Craven Wagner is the Editor of Cape Cod HOME.