

WINDOW on Success

Peter Malone built his Seaport Shutter business from the ground up and customers notice the difference.

BY ROB DUCA • PHOTOGRAPHY BY

When Peter Malone decided to start a company more than 20 years ago that sold only shutters, people asked, “Who buys shutters?”

As Malone soon found out, there are plenty of people who want quality, Architecturally Correct™ shutters for both the historic homes as well as new construction. What began as a one-man operation out of his carriage house behind his South Natick, Massachusetts, home, has turned into Seaport Shutter in Brewster, with more than a dozen employees and orders shipped around the United States. Today, Seaport Shutter offers interior and exterior shutters, wooden screen and storm doors, Adirondack chairs and carved signs, all custom made from premium-grade mahogany and kiln-dried western red cedar.



Caption goes here for this photo. Caption goes here for this photo. Caption goes here for this photo. Caption goes here for this photo.

“The old days are back when quality materials and craftsmanship were combined to yield a perfect product,” says Malone. “There are very few people that will come to your house to determine what style shutter looks best, and then will manufacture it, paint it, install it and guarantee it for five years. We put everything under one umbrella.”

In the beginning, Malone did all that himself. “At night he’d be in the carriage house making shutters and Adirondack chairs,” says his daughter, Lauren Huard, now Seaport’s director of sales and customer relations. “I remember him painting shutters in my brother’s bedroom at night.”

Malone was working in corporate finance and looking for a change of career when he happened upon the idea of starting a shutter company after he was unable to find decorative shutters for his family’s summer home in Harwich Port. “I couldn’t find anything I liked, so I made them myself,” he says.



Caption goes here for this photo. Caption goes here for this photo. Caption goes here for this photo. Caption goes here for this photo.

Before long, people driving past the house were knocking on his door wondering where he bought the unique shutters with the nautical theme. He smelled a business opportunity and a new career path. “When I started the business, I told my wife it was a Chardonnay-induced decision to leave corporate finance and venture out on my own, but it has worked out pretty well,” says Malone. “We’ve been able to succeed because people want to see beautiful shutters on their house that are the right color and the right size.”

He built the business while continuing to work full-time for the first five years, occasionally stunning customers by showing up for a potential job wearing a suit. “I was coming straight from work,” he says. “They were surprised to see me at night, but I had no choice. I had a day job. But I was planting a seed, hoping it would grow.”

He used the money earned from his first big job to help purchase Seaport’s current building in Brewster, which once housed one of the Cape’s original gas stations. He also rented a space in Natick that catered to the suburbs of Boston. During his first summer in business, he took out a small ad in the local Yellow Pages to gauge interest, and then headed to the Cape for a three-week vacation with his family.





[Caption goes here for this photo.](#) [Caption goes here for this photo.](#) [Caption goes here for this photo.](#) [Caption goes here for this photo.](#)

“I hired an answering service and kept checking in, and every day someone had called looking for shutters. I was amazed. I worked the entire three weeks instead of spending it on the beach. That ad jump-started us. That’s when I knew this business would work,” he says.

Seaport Shutter custom makes a wide variety of shutter styles, including mixed louver, board and batten, raised panel, flat panel, traditional louver and Olde style. All of Seaport’s custom products can be adorned with 23-karat gold leaf, silver leaf or custom-painted appliques that are made in house and can be designed to a customer’s preference. Homeowners can also select cutout designs and special carvings from Seaport’s collection.

Malone added another arm of the business in 2014, The Sign Shop at Seaport Shutter, specializing in custom-carved house number and starboard signs. “It was a natural extension of the business and has proved to be very successful so far,” observes Malone.



The company has also launched its own paint line, The Seaport Palette. Cranberry Harvest Red, Figawi Fog, Sand Dune, Moocusser Black, Oyster White and Brewster in Bloom Yellow are a sampling of available colors.

“People are very emotional about these products,” Malone says. “What we do is transform someone’s house, so it’s a very joyful, gratifying business.”