

southforker[®]

southforker.com
JUNE 2025

*Sip, sup and be very summer merry
at Daunt's Albatross*



THE **ART HOUSE**
THAT MA'S
GRANDSON BUILT

GUILD HALL'S **GLAM
MAKEOVER**

MAC METALWORKS
IRON MAN,
MICHAEL
CHIARELLO

BEN KRUPINSKI
BUILDER KEEPS
OUR **ART AND
HISTORY**
CENTERS AROUND
FOR THE LONG
HAUL



ABOUT THE COVER June 2025

Leo Daunt's grandparents founded their Montauk hotel in the spirit of entertaining friends and family, which is what he's carrying on today. Be it the great food and drink or summer-perfect poolside action, I love how this image from Doug Young brings me right there!

WHEN I was a kid, my mom used to bring me to see "The Nutcracker" at Guild Hall's John Drew Theater (recently rechristened the Hilarie and Mitchell Morgan Theater) at Christmastime. Gussied up in our finest, I remember being awed by the building's stately but welcoming arches. Nestled next to my mom as the lights dimmed on the circus-like theater, I had the feeling that something wonderful was about to happen.

I think that's how we all felt when Guild Hall's two-plus year renovation was finally finished, but maybe a little more: like something wonderful wasn't just about to happen, but was going to keep those feelings of awe, wonder and curiosity going for generations. In this, our Arts & Entertainment issue,

we celebrate so many wonderful creatives in our community, including a story by staffer Emily Toy on Guild Hall's amazing update (p. 52) and the truly wonderful people involved in it.

One of those partners in bringing the East Hampton arts institution back to life was the East End construction firm Ben Krupinski Builder (p. 86), who not only worked on Guild Hall's transformation but that of other beloved Hamptons cultural spots such as the East Hampton Library, the Parrish Art Museum and the Amagansett Life-Saving and Coast Guard Station. Lana Bortolot got down to the studs with the company's principals Ray Harden and Stratton Schellinger on what draws them to the work they do on arts institutions and historical buildings beloved to the East End.

I got some insight on the melding (and welding) of art and function with MAC Metalworks owner Mike Chiarello (p. 76), as well as have my mind expanded by the all-encompassing cultural mecca that is Ma's House (p. 38), a place with so much heart. Emily got the skinny on where to shimmy (p. 27) and explored the next generation of Daunt's Albatross and how its current family

shepherd, Leo, has made a multi-faceted groove-eat-sleep situation of his family's long-running digs (p. 64).

Stephanie Villani took a peek into Stella Flame Gallery (p. 94). I checked in with podcaster and media maven Ryan Sherman on his favorite East End things (p. 30), we found gifts galore at the excellent gift shop at the Parrish (p. 20) — and we even got a swanky cocktail from Sag Harbor Cinema bartender extraordinaire, Deborah Lee (p. 102).

Art, music, dance — it's all so wonderfully, deeply ingrained in our terrain out here on the East End. And it's everywhere. Go getcha some, South Forkers.

Amy Zavatto
Editor-in

the art of the build



PHOTOGRAPHY: JEFF HEATLEY

The iconic and eye-catching Parrish Art Museum is a stunning example of Ben Krupinski Builder's mark on the Hamptons.

Ben Krupinski Builder preserves East End history, one structure at a time

by Lana Bortolot



if



you've noticed some of the Hamptons' oldest institutions looking new again over the past few years, chances are high the contracting firm of Ben Krupinski Builder had something to do with it. Founded by Hamptons native Ben Krupinski, the firm has been charged with updating and upgrading some of the East End's most revered historic sites: East Hampton's Guild Hall and 1770 Hedges-Edward Barn, the East Hampton Library, the East Hampton Historical Society, the Amagansett Life-Saving & Coast Guard Station Museum, and Scoville Hall, also in Amagansett. Additionally, the firm oversaw the 2012 construction of Water Mill's Parrish Art Museum.

Krupinski died in a plane crash in 2018, but his legacy and passion for historic preservation live on in the firm's principals, Stratton Schellinger and Ray Harden, who, after 31 and 16 years, respectively, of working for Krupinski, now own the company. Since then, the partners have executed a seamless transition into a new era, but one with a firm regard for the past.

Carrying On

"Benny made things happen and Stratton and I have both learned from him, so we keep that legacy going," says Harden. "Benny would have wanted us to keep it going as if he was still there."

Harden and Schellinger both come from local stock. Born in Hempstead, Harden moved to East Hampton when he was two and graduated from the now-closed Mercy High School (as did Krupinski.) He recalls, "As a kid, I always wanted to be either an Oakland Raider or in construction. I certainly don't have the size to be a football player, so construction it was." Harden went right to it after high school and learned on the job, starting his career with Krupinski before spending 16 years working at Riverhead Building Supply, where he learned the ins and outs of the trade, from materials and process to sales and estimating. He returned to work for Krupinski in 2002.

Schellinger, a carpenter by trade, grew up in Sag Harbor and is the current generation in a long line of skilled tradesmen. "[We have a]

history of carpenters spread out, dating all the way back to my ancestors settling in Amagansett in the 1700s," he says. "It wasn't long before I realized I wanted to build. I fell in love with carpentry and building right away." He began working with Krupinski in 1986, the year he started the company.

A passion for history

Ben Krupinski Builder is headquartered in East Hampton with 42 employees and has a satellite office in Greenwich, Conn. Harden says about 85% of the company's portfolio is residential construction, with the remainder focused on public institutions. Harden has made preservation somewhat of a passion project: He sits on the board of the East Hampton Historical Society and has led the building and grounds committee since 2022. With his experience and personal interest working in tandem, Harden expects Ben Krupinski Builder will become an even more important player when it comes to conserving East End history and culture.

"I think growing that portion of the business will happen naturally through word-of-mouth and reputation," he says.

The company has refined its expertise with its ability to navigate the rigid rules of historic preservation and problem solve, leading to respectful renovations and repairs. In 2014, for the 9,000-square-foot children's reading room addition to the East Hampton Library designed by Robert Stern and Lee Scholnick, library executive director Dennis Fabiszak says the challenge was not only to create more storage for books and materials, but to provide an "educational space for community children that would blend in seamlessly with the rest of the historical building."

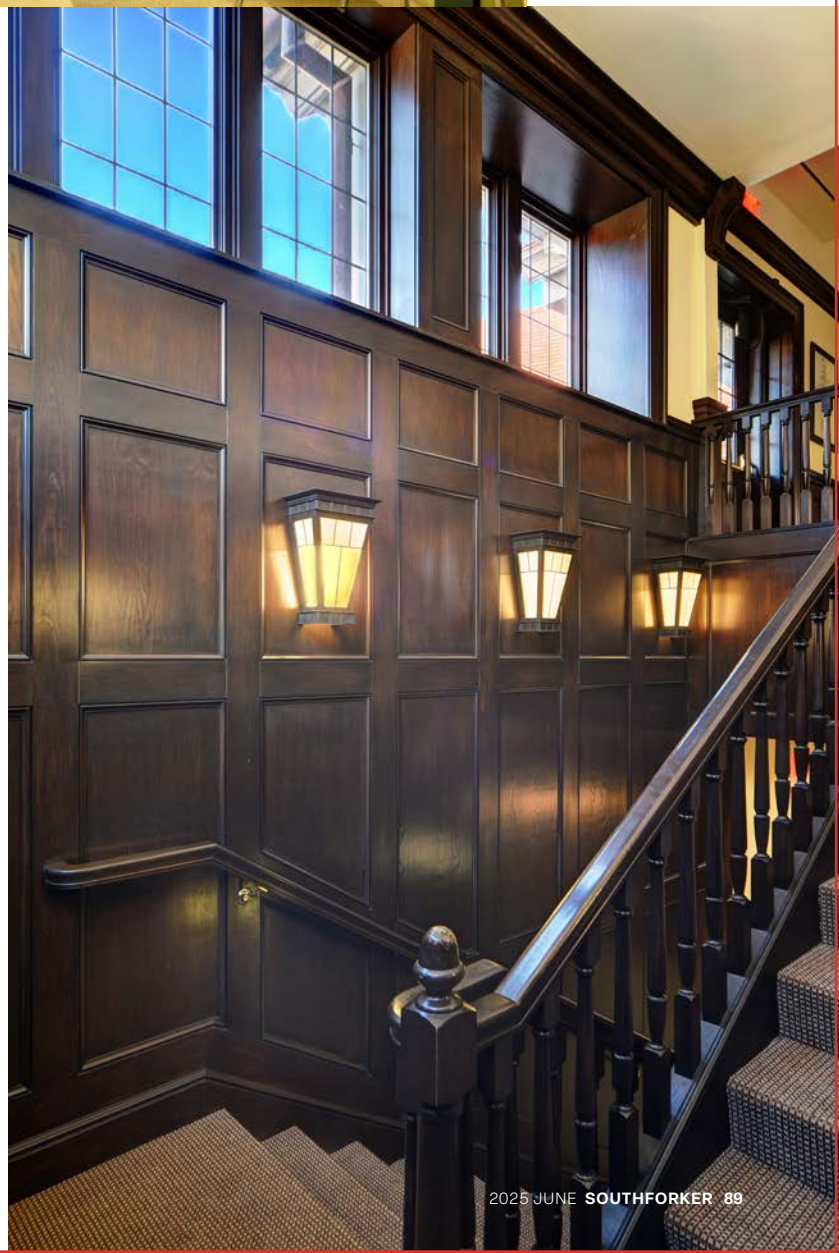
Outside, that included creating replicas of the library's original leaded glass windows. Harden knew of a company that specialized in such work, but matching the new roof tiles to the original required some creative problem solving.

"This was a very detailed slate roof, so there was a challenge to get the colors matched up," he says. His firm procured samples in various



Partner Ray Harden worked to make sure the new Young Adult Reading Room at the East Hampton Library was completed in time for the local kids who collaborated at the idea stage on the project to see the finished product.

For the children's reading room at the East Hampton Library, Ben Krupinski Builder fashioned special details like a "windmill" in the reading area and exposed wood beams.



Historial projects have become a calling card for Ben Krupinski Builder partners Ray Harden (below) and Stratton Schellinger (right).



“We are very involved in every project and we take pride in the work that we do. We’re a strong company and we’re holding on to the legacy from our teacher.”





For East Hampton Village's 100th anniversary parade, Harden and his crew created a replica of the old Village Town Hall.

shades of red and, by blending them as they were laid, were able to replicate the original closely enough to pass muster. It wasn't a pure color match as much as it was an effects match in concert with the original 1912 neo-Elizabethan building.

Interior work for the addition required mimicking some of the original details, such as exposed wood beams, mill work and finishes, while incorporating whimsical features that echo local history — a windmill reading area, a lighthouse and a ship's hull desk.

This year, the Krupinski team was called back to the East Hampton Library to work on the young adults room, used as a space for public seminars and gathering, but with creative nods to the historic fabric such as the ceiling pattern, which mirrors the pattern of the floor.

"Ray was fully in charge and continued with the same mindset and process as before," Fabiszak recalls. "It needed to be done quickly with a hard opening date of June because he wanted the kids who helped plan it to see it before they graduated. I can't imagine finding another company that would have dropped everything and do that because they knew how important it was to the kids and the community."

Harden says, "Anything in the historic district we love to do because it is a challenge and we're always up for it. The more challenging the project, the more we want to do it because we like to use our minds and figure things out."

Updating a community's cultural space

The firm had the opportunity to work on the circa 1931 Guild Hall cultural center twice: the first under Krupinski's oversight, and more recently when the building's technology became outdated.

The contractors, says Guild Hall executive director Andrea Grover, "knew the building inside and out and are like family to us, so we trusted them on this project. We are a historic building — 94 years

old this year — so you're dealing with a property that has century-old construction and was built during the Great Depression without a lot of flourishes and with an economy of means, so they have to be sensitive to that and yet introduce all these modern-day technologies."

Harden remembers that during the first renovation they were instructed to preserve the Guild Hall's existing projector, which was somewhat of a relic but authentic to the theater. The second renovation replaced it with equipment that is smaller, lighter and delivers a better picture.

Working with architect Peter Pennoyer, the Krupinski team began the second renovation about three years ago and finished last June. Round two opened up the basement-level offices to create more light, overhauled the lighting in the gallery space and expanded the lobby area to improve the flow into the theater. The signature circus-tent ceiling was preserved.

"It was like trying to put a new dress on an old skeleton," Grover says, and in the end, "It was a magic trick, what they did, and it was all done with incredible grace."

Housing a cultural heritage

A current project with the East Hampton Historical Society involves designing and building the Museum Collections Storage Center at Mulford Farm.

"Our community's cultural heritage is stewarded by the historical society and we have nearly 20,000 artifacts — everything including the kitchen sink — bicycles, farm implements, harpoons, musical instruments," says historical society executive director Steve Long. "Not a real lot of effort had gone into making sure these objects were cared for the way they ought to be."

After a 2021 capital campaign, funds were raised to construct a 5,700-square-foot building to not only house the items but to create a space that could help tell the public their stories. Long says that Harden's experience on the historical society's board gave Harden insight into the organization's long-term goals. By estimating and reviewing plans, he was able to save the institution about 20% on an alternate construction. And Harden has delivered phase one of the project ahead of schedule — and in time for fundraising season, which began in late spring.

Long says, "We didn't have all the money we needed, but Ray said he would make sure the project was complete, and you hear this over and over: He makes sure it's finished the way it's supposed to. And he does not toot his own horn."

Carrying on a legacy

Schellinger says the firm's goals are to "deliver the highest-quality workmanship for the best possible price through knowledge and experience in the building trade, hard work and negotiation."

Harden agrees. "We are very involved in every project and we take pride in the work that we do. We're a strong company and we're holding on to the legacy from our teacher," he says.

"These places have history and that represents something that you can pass on down through the generations and share with the generations. The work has really opened my eyes to being a great part of history." 📍



After a two-year plus renovation, East Hampton's Guild Hall — one of the nation's first multidisciplinary institutions — is fully open and firing on all cylinders.

PHOTOGRAPHY: JOE BRANDO FOR GUILD HALL



ART BY THE PEOPLE, ART FOR THE PEOPLE

*At nearly a century old, Guild Hall remains
the East End's blended cultural hub*

by EMILY TOY



East Hampton's Guild Hall has very unusual DNA.

Originally created as a civic institution bookended by a museum and a theater, it was the belief of East Hampton resident, philanthropist and founder Mary Woodhouse and her husband, Lorenzo, that exposure to the arts, whether through drama or exhibitions, would make people better citizens.

Open since 1931, early Guild Hall trustees were mostly members of the social elite, usually conservative and with token representation from the year-round community. That quickly changed as intentions shifted to make the locale not only a welcoming place for community members who appreciated the arts, but a gathering place for the artists themselves.

"[Mary Woodhouse] believed that we'd be better neighbors, we'd be better critical thinkers, we'd be more engaged in civic life if we experienced art together," says Guild Hall executive director Andrea Grover. "I've found it hard to find an organization exactly like ours anywhere."

CARING FOR THE COMMUNITY

Erected during the Great Depression and at the tail-end of Prohibition, Guild Hall was built with no major endowment or comprehensive plan for running it.

"It's almost as if you couldn't recreate the circumstances in which it was founded," Grover says. "There was a kind of, I think, economy of means when the building was built," with the executive director estimating the hall was run by volunteers, committees and community members for at least the first 30 years of its existence.

The inspiration for Guild Hall's name came from British guildhalls originally built by professional associations but ultimately used for cultural and civic purposes. In 1930, Woodhouse anonymously dedicated land and the initial financial gift toward the building of Guild Hall, with the vision to highlight the importance of the arts — but also, Grover theorizes, to be built for her daughter Marjorie, for whom the nearby Woodhouse Playhouse was originally built in 1916, the year of Marjorie's 16th birthday.

THIS PAGE Two galleries, Marks Family Gallery North and Marks Family Gallery South, cover over 3,000 square feet of exhibition space. **OPPOSITE** Guild Hall's founder, Mary Woodhouse.



“We’re in touch with our community because we want to make sure that we do things that are not only interesting, but also mindful and that serve the community. That’s important to us.”



“Marjorie was a very creative individual, and I think that it was an extension of their relationship,” Grover says of the mother-daughter duo. After Marjorie died in a car accident in 1933, Grover believes the community rallied around a melancholy Woodhouse, securing additional funding through a local campaign in which everyone from artists and writers to small-business owners contributed \$10 each to complete construction.

This sort of grassroots initiative has remained a driving force of Guild Hall’s *modus operandi*, and the visceral community connectedness demonstrated in the 1930s has made an impact on Amy Steinhaus Kirwin, Guild Hall’s chief creative officer. A Los Angeles transplant, Kirwin believes the fact that the community was so invested during Guild Hall’s early days is what has allowed the organization to achieve not only great success but great respect and adoration.

“I’ve always found things interesting that I discover along the way about how a small community works,” Kirwin says. “But this one, this in particular, always sort of surprised and delighted me, to see how engaged and impacted people are by what we do. We’re in touch with our community because we want to make sure that we do things that are not only interesting, but also mindful and that serve the community. That’s important to us.”

OMNIVORES OF ARTS AND CULTURE

Since almost the beginning, Guild Hall has continually been a place for not only blending traditional, classical work with the more experimental and avant-garde, but a consistent haven for showcasing art made both by famous, world-renowned artists and contemporary, unknown creatives.

As one of the nation’s first multidisciplinary cultural institutions, it holds a permanent collection of 2,400 works, with exhibitions including pieces from countless internationally celebrated artists including Jackson Pollock, Willem de Kooning, Audrey Flack and Eric Fischl. Additionally, the hall has hosted hundreds of performances from world-class stars of stage and screen like Helen Hayes, Carrie Fisher, Bob Fosse, Olivia de Havilland and Eli Wallach. It has helped establish and nurture the reputations of legendary literary figures, too, like Edward Albee, Eugene O’Neill and Tennessee Williams.

Presenting more than 200 programs and hosting about 60,000 visitors each year, Guild Hall has been leading the East End’s charge on keeping a humanist approach to accessing art and the people who make it. Its galleries, which cover 3,050 square feet, can hold up to eight exhibitions, while its 3,000-square-foot theater produces well over 100 programs a year, ranging from theatrical plays and literary



FROM LEFT TO RIGHT
Guild Hall's chief
creative officer Amy
Steinhaus Kirwin;
inside the Boots Lamb
Education Center;
executive director
Andrea Grover.



readings to concerts and film screenings.

"It's kind of non-hierarchical and also very, very diverse," Grover says of Guild Hall's programming. "We like to say we're like omnivores of art and culture."

While maintaining a unique combination of programs in both the establishment's museum and theater arenas — an accredited museum from the American Association of Museums since 1973, a prestigious distinction held by only about a thousand others nationwide — Guild Hall is also chartered as an educational institution through the State of New York. The Guild Hall Teen Arts Council is the region's first paid teen arts program, and the on-site Boots Lamb Education Center (revitalized technologically during the cultural center's extensive two-plus-year renovations) offers flexible space for meetings, classes, rehearsals, workshops and project work.

"We always call them the three pillars of Guild Hall: visual arts, performing arts and arts education," Grover says. "What Guild Hall has done for these many decades is combine the arts so interdisciplinary, or cross disciplinary. Bringing the disciplines together has been the focus of our program for at least the last five years." Historically, that's meant a crisscross pollination of the arts, such as artists producing set designs for a theater piece, the Teen Arts

Council working hands-on with exhibiting artists, or poets performing in the galleries.

More and more, part of offering innovative and engaging programming is, for Kirwin, about trying to take inspiration from one area to the next so that there's a cohesion.

"I think that also helps when it comes to marketing the institution, because there's a very clear message and a clear intention," she says, "partly because we all work so closely together, from a programming perspective and from a community engagement perspective — so, between visual arts, performing arts, learning community engagement, we're always in conversation with each other. There's a very clear and open dialog about what's going on, so we can make things cohesive. There's a lot of different things going on, for sure, but there's a very clear intention."

A RENO WITH REACH

Beginning in 2021, Guild Hall underwent a facility-wide, nearly \$30 million capital improvements project, which included restoring the cultural institution's beloved circus-tent-themed theater as well as renovating gallery spaces, education rooms, outdoor gardens and gathering spaces, offices, and art-handling facilities, resulting in a

THIS PAGE: The beloved circus-tent-ceilinged theater was fully restored thanks to a landmark gift from Hilarie and Mitchell Morgan.
OPPOSITE: The lobby re-introduced original columns plus a new sitting space.



“Guild Hall has personality. We are not anonymous. It’s all of us, it’s everybody who’s on stage; everyone who comes here is part of that personality.”



near-total upgrade of the building’s 24,000-square-foot building and 46,000-square-foot property. Additionally, the reno included an overhaul of the HVAC systems, a partial new roof and state-of-the-art acoustic improvements.

The project was overseen by historic architecture leader Peter Pennoyer Architects and executed by local construction company Ben Krupinski Builder. Other integral members of the design and construction team included theatrical consultants Apeiro Design, Long Island-based security system supplier and technological concierge Bri-Tech, renowned New York-based Hollander Design and Landscape Architects, and Connecticut sound and acoustics firm Akustiks.

“It’s like a magic trick because it looks and feels like it has the same character that it’s had, and it has the same scale that it’s had, but it now functions as a new construction,” Grover says. “Guild Hall has personality. We are not anonymous. It’s all of us, it’s everybody who’s on stage; everyone who comes here is part of that personality. And it should feel like that when you come in.”

Construction began in summer 2022 and the galleries, grounds, classroom and offices reopened in July 2023. In addition to state-of-the-art technology and acoustic improvements, like a remote-control camera system for live streaming and a dynamic audio lift system, the theater’s iconic circus-tent ceiling motif and ballroom chandeliers remain but with a newer, more comfortable seating arrangement via enhanced sightlines through an increased floor rake. The theater reopened in 2024. Boasting 299 seats, it has been renamed the Hilarie and Mitchell Morgan Theater, as the pair’s landmark gift enabled the space’s comprehensive transformation.

Other improvements include larger full-glass wooden-framed doors to allow more light to stream in and to be more spatially accommodating, revitalizing the lobby, installing a coffee bar and designing entrances to be inclusively accessible.

This year marks the first time in five years that Guild Hall will be fully back in action, ready to fire on all cylinders. Now that the construction dust has been settled and swept, the top of Grover’s hit list for this season, she says, is a simple but all-encompassing act: “We’re excited to take it out for a spin!” 🌀

