

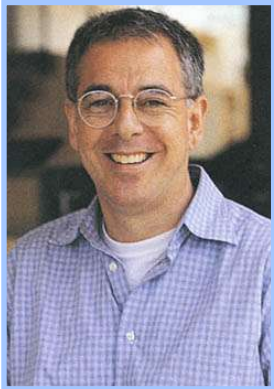
# OBJEKT

1998 -1999



The photo on the left is of the outside shower beside the pool. The exterior walls and roof are in tinted cedar. Below, a portrait of the architect Donald Billinkoff, and right at the bottom of the page, the central working block in the kitchen. The staircase up to the first floor leads to the guest-rooms and a study. The stairs are screened by stainless steel cables, bronze rods and a mahogany banister. The left-hand wall is made in horizontal bands of two shades of grey.

## *Donald Billinkoff's first House*



In the wooded environs of East Hampton Donald Billinkoff opted for a 'total design', with house, interior and landscaping forming an integrated whole. Ruud van der Neut speaks to the architect about his creation, on the spot where 'money meets good soil'.



The spacious bathroom with limestone tiles on the floor and walls. On the far left, a cupboard in bleached maple for storing towels. The wall with access to the shower is painted pale blue. The oval bath is by Americh.  
Above, the master bedroom with a bed of generous proportions. This room is between the living area and the bathroom with adjoining gym.





Above, the entrance to the house, seen from the first floor, resembles a gatehouse, completely covered with cedar shingles. On the right the exterior of the long corridor with its glazed roof which links up the various parts of the house. The front perron is made in mahogany. Below, the view of the entrance and the right wing of the house where the guest accommodation is located.



*Text: Ruudvan der Neut*  
*Photos: Hans Fonk*

"I'd already worked out the main outline of this house in my head, before I got the job." The architect Donald Billinkoff went on to explain: "It's actually the house I'd always longed to build for myself. Unfortunately I didn't have the wherewithal to do so. But the commission from two New York career women to design a house for them in The Hamptons was the proverbial dream come true. The clients were wildly enthusiastic about my ideas from the start. It's crucial for client and architect to decide things in consultation if you're to get the best results. The intended location was ideal too; a good site was available, still overgrown with trees, bushes and weeds before we started construction. It's in a quiet area outside East Hampton.

The first requirement was that the building should blend into the setting harmoniously. The exterior and the interior had to form a seamless extension of The Hamptons' natural Spectrum. Together we opted for an interpretation of the elements of water, air, sand and grass. It took a year and half to draw and work out the details of the design. Its ultimate execution took a year. It had become an overall-project; all the furniture was also specially designed for the East Hampton house."

The colour scheme of the house is made up of shades of faded blue, a variety of greys, pale green and various beige tones. The grounds, which have meanwhile been replanted, were designed by the landscape architect Margie Ruddick. The overall length of the premises is thirty-six metres. The entrance has a central location in the lengthwise axis of the house, which would appear to consist of several small buildings.

As Billinkoff graphically described it: "The entire complex resembles a compact cluster of little houses. On the outside clad with overlapping cedar shingles. The gabled roofs are also partially shingled. I wanted to create a kind of village, in which the various elements are directly related. But small differences in height mean the private area and the areas used for socializing are separate to some extent. The long corridor - with natural light penetration through the glazed roof - connects the various areas. The Frit glass that has been used filters the light through a silkscreen coating. The left wing of the house contains the occupants private accommodation, including the master bedroom, a spacious bathroom with the bath placed on the diagonal, a separate shower and a home gym. One of the occupants has a study here too, as well as a sitting-room and the private sun terrace.



Above, a view from the kitchen to the living-room. The corridor at the back gives access to the master bedroom and bathroom. Below, the kitchen area, over 6 metres in height. The tiles on the floor are of blue-grey slate. The tiles above the working tops and cooking hob are somewhat convex. The bar stools around the central working block were designed by Dennis Miller Associates. The cupboards, in bleached maple and washed-in walnut, were all made in Montauk, NY, by Kitchens and Baths, Linda Burkhardt.

The sitting-room which is located a little lower opens into the dining-room, with no wall or glass partition between the two. The absolute attention-grabber must be the double-height kitchen. The 8 by 5-metre area, with its high roof-lights, is dominated by a central working block with granite work-top, which also functions as a dining bar. The specially designed cupboards are made in bleached, greenish maple, washed-in walnut and glass. The colours refer to the weathered driftwood you find on The Hamptons' beaches after a gale. All this was made by Kitchens and Baths, Linda Burkhardt in Montauk, NY. Bluish slate was chosen for the floor tiles. The occupants are averse to noise; the power unit for the stainless steel extractor hood is located on the roof. The double, stainless steel fridge is of the Sub-Zero make, the 'Cadillac' of fridges. The cooking unit is by Viking. The occupants lead a busy social life; there are guests almost every weekend. The right wing houses the guest-rooms and bathrooms. On this side of the house there are also a swimming-pool, changing room plus kitchenette, shower, small guest section and tennis court. A partly roofed-in terrace is located close to the tennis court. Billinkoff chose mahogany for the various decks surrounding the house; as time goes by, exposure to the sunlight will lend it a specific colour.

The occupants and the architect also paid special attention to the furnishings. For instance, the tiles decorating the fireplace in the sitting-room were made to their colour specifications in the style of Gustav Stickley, the famous New York architect and interior designer from the beginning of this century. The seating in this room was designed by Donghia Furniture and Textiles. In the serene ambience of the master bedroom, the bed and wheeled cupboards, custom-designed by Billinkoff, immediately catch the eye. The cabinet-maker, Don Simon, implemented the architect's design. And in various places throughout the house, rugs can be found by different designers - including Odegard and the Soho-based artist Christine Vanderhurd. Attention has even been paid to the containers for tissues which are found here and there. A lovely - minimal - design by Calvin Klein matches, in 'ton sur ton', the colour scheme of the house. The garage houses a new BMW Z3 sports car, under a protective cover. The architect commented, somewhat derisively: "Everyone in The Hamptons has one!". Clearly that's one design that isn't exclusive enough for him.

Donald Billinkoff can be proud of his creation. It is his first 'total design' since he started working for himself in 1991. He told OBJEKT: "Before that I worked on projects like theatres, a library and a wing for the Los Angeles County Museum. Since I've had my own architectural practice I've mainly been occupied with apartment renovations in Manhattan. And that's how I met these clients. I converted their apartment in New York in 1992. In the past I often worked on existing buildings, and was mainly involved with the interior. The fact that you can realize a dream you've had since you were a student - to build a house just the way you want - is the ultimate reward.

