

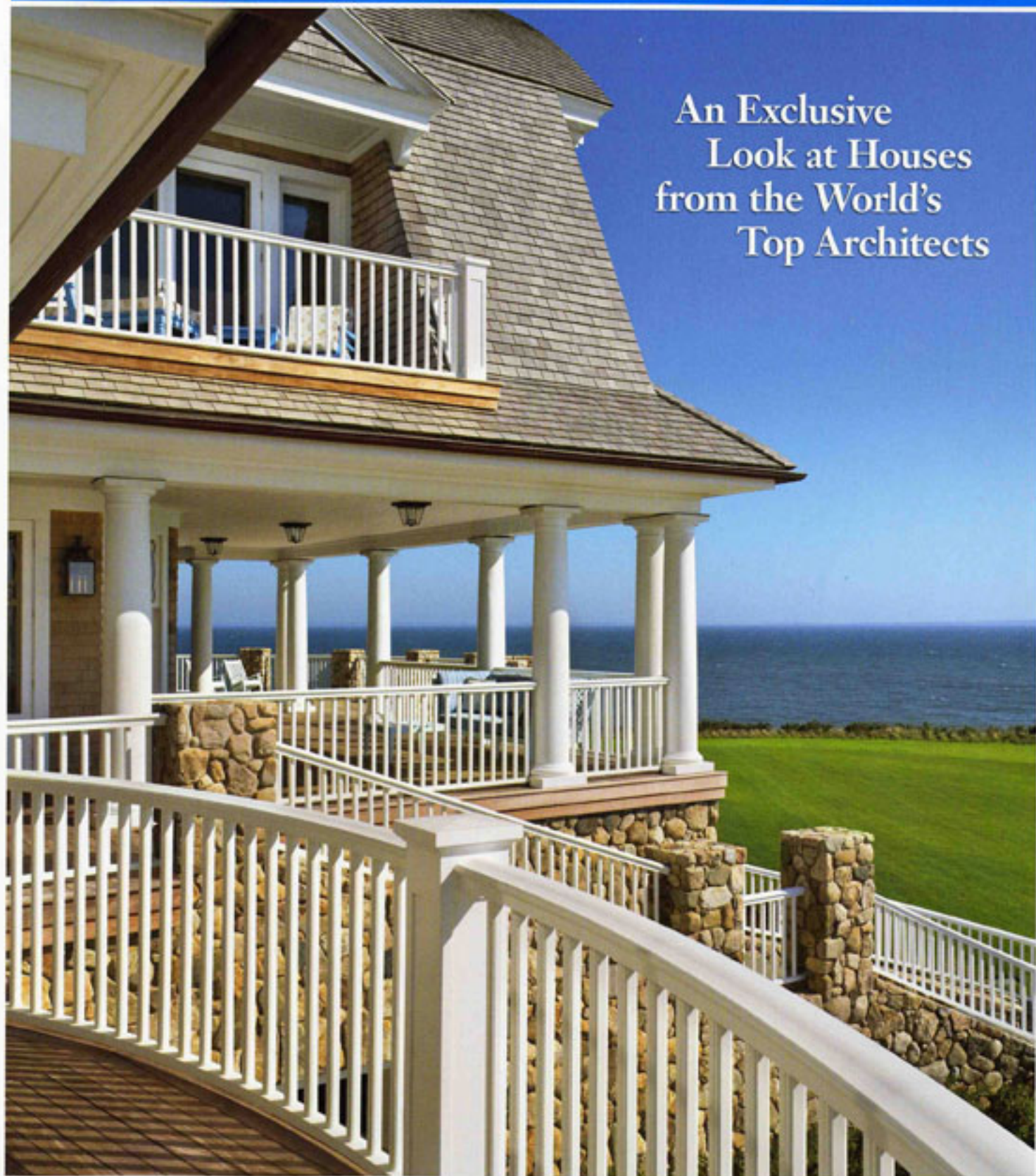
ARCHITECTURAL DIGEST

THE INTERNATIONAL MAGAZINE OF DESIGN

OCTOBER 2008

THE ARCHITECTURE ISSUE

An Exclusive
Look at Houses
from the World's
Top Architects



“Time is the main consideration. Some people are willing to wait. Some can't.”



The Peninsula Chaise, designed by Terry Hunziker, shown in custom yacht finish.

MADE TO ORDER

DAVID SUTHERLAND

In design, when anything's possible, experience makes a difference. That's especially true for David Sutherland, the mastermind behind the 16-year-old Dallas-based furnishings manufacturer with showrooms across the country.

Sutherland has long considered made-to-order the order of the day, whether that means changes to existing pieces or inventing brand new designs. "We actively seek custom commissions," he explains. "Time is the main consideration. Some people are willing to wait. Some can't." With production facilities both overseas and in Dallas to accommodate these orders (the stateside factory is key to faster turnarounds), the company's repertoire includes outdoor and indoor furniture, upholstery, cushions, accessories and more. The firm has fashioned everything from teak vanities with art-glass fixtures for Caribbean residences to upholstered pieces for projects in Dubai to items for the world's most elite yachts.

Well-versed in woods—especially teak—Sutherland's custom team knows the ins and outs of aluminum and other metals as well. "Many people think teak should be left unfinished,

but it's also exceptionally beautiful with a finish," he asserts. Sutherland's Custom Yacht finish is the proof: a multi-step process, it involves 12 to 17 coats of hand-applied, high-gloss marine varnish, with ultra-fine sanding and polishing in between each coat to create a mirror-like sheen and depth.

With today's custom possibilities, décor has never been more personal. Here, companies that raise the bar on brilliant bespoke design.

The firm's custom efforts are specific to furniture, for the most part. "We know how to engineer and make furniture that's structurally sound and that looks good," Sutherland says. Everything starts with the designer and the local showroom. The designer submits drawings, which the showroom forwards to the custom group in Dallas for estimates. This group includes four people in product development and computer-aided design (CAD), two in production, and one quality control master. "Our custom capabilities have evolved around and with technology," he says. "Our factories are all state-of-the-art, so it's very easy to communicate long distance."

The custom group stays on top of it and in touch through delivery. Sutherland says, "Our sources make up a supply chain that spans the globe. Combine that with our production and design services, and you get a team that can deliver whatever the customer can imagine."