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Blaze Makoid

Legacy, Scale, & The Quiet Rebellion Inside Hamptons Luxury

By Ty Wenzel



Photos courtesy Blaze Makoid Architects

In the Hamptons, where glass walls and clean lines have long served as the quick reference for modern luxury, Blaze Makoid has dedicated the past two decades to creating something far less ostentatious, yet considerably more lasting. His work isn't driven by fleeting trends or even by the lens of a camera, despite living in an era where many homes are conceived as much for Instagram as for everyday living. Instead, Makoid's architectural journey begins on a smaller, almost imperceptible scale: the natural reach of a hand, the comfortable rhythm of someone moving through a room, the quiet, unwritten choreography of daily existence.

From his early days tackling modest projects to his current role shaping some of the Hamptons' most significant legacy homes, Makoid has steadily resisted the urge to "max out" for the sake of a quick resale or a grand spectacle. His philosophy stands as both pragmatic and quietly revolutionary — to design for the ninety-five percent of life that truly unfolds within a space, not just the fleeting five percent. He seeks to create environments meant to evolve and endure for generations, rather than be flipped in a single season. In a market increasingly defined by its uniformity, its sheer scale, and the relentless pursuit of the perfect image, Makoid puts forth a different idea: architecture viewed not as an object, but as a lived experience —

one that often cannot be fully captured, and indeed, was never meant to be.

The Hamptons have shifted from shingle-style tradition to glass-and-steel minimalism. Do you see your work as part of that disruption or a response to it?

This shift started years ago, and we were fortunate to be only in that world to begin with. When I started the office in 2000, there wasn't a lot of demand for what I was interested in exploring.

Your work has a very clear architectural voice. How do you maintain that when you're designing for clients with strong personalities and expectations?

It can be a challenge, and to be completely honest, it's not always successful. That said, we've been incredibly fortunate to have been entrusted by some wonderful clients who not just share, but on that rare occasion — push our vision.

At the ultra-luxury level, is architecture still about living or is it about status and resale? Or all-of-the-above?



It's a bit of each. When I started the firm, we were doing incredibly small projects. The benefit of that experience was that it allowed us to focus on the smallest of issues, primarily concerning the scale and actions of the human body. How far can someone reach? How high should this hook be? How wide should an aisle be to allow two people to walk holding hands? Basically — life. I'm also a realist. No matter how wealthy you may be, these are still substantial investments, and that has to be considered. Much of our work we look at as legacy projects. They're not designed (or built) to flip. They're intended to be in the family for generations as well as bring families together in the present.

I would be plastering any home you designed for me on an hourly basis to my Instagram — they are absolutely stunning. How much does the reality of social media and listing culture influence architecture today?

I love this question. I think about this all the time. I've watched this cultural shift with a degree of sadness. It doesn't just affect architecture, it affects how people experience the world, and I don't think that much for the better. I watch every day, the need for the perfect image outweighing the actual experience. It's like checking a box and feels so planned that the possibility of the "wonderful accident" has all but evaporated. I also appreciate the compliment, but you might be surprised to hear that our projects are incredibly difficult to photograph. We design more for the experience than the object, and that is hard to capture in a still image. Our photographers complain all the time!

In places like Sagaponack and Bridgehampton, there's increasing pressure on

scale — bigger homes, more amenities. Where do you personally draw the line between luxury and excess?

This is really a pressure of the investment. The need to "max out" the build. These properties are worth so much that this a battle constantly fought. I understand the thinking. We do try to have honest conversations with our clients about their needs vs. their wants. We often talk about designing for the 95% of your life, not the 5%. We also discuss a long-term master plan when it's appropriate. Design and build for now that allows for a second or third phase of work in the future. Let the project evolve as your life does.

Clients in the Hamptons often want privacy but also want homes that make a statement. How do you reconcile those two impulses?

To some extent, it's the idea of quiet luxury. We don't need the three-story arch announcing the front door, but when you do approach the front door, what is the experience? Is it abrupt or leisurely? What are the materials? How are they finished? This is insanely difficult to communicate prior to the completion of the project. We can't communicate this in a drawing.

There's a growing sameness at the top end of the market — clean lines, open glass, neutral palettes. Do you worry that luxury architecture is becoming formulaic?

To some extent, yes, and I think it's twofold. One issue is the fear of being original. This goes back to the investment issue. If the project is too unique, how does the market assess its value. The other, in my opinion, is the way our zoning codes

are constructed. They have become so prescriptive that it has stifled exploration to some degree.

Sustainability is often part of the conversation, but rarely the headline in ultra-luxury homes. How real is that commitment in your projects?

We're not pretending to "greenwash" our work. The truth is, our local building codes are very demanding when it comes to energy efficiency. More so than most of the country. We also believe our projects are designed and built to last for many generations. At least, that's our goal.

What's something clients ask for all the time that you think is actually a mistake?

Roof decks. If anyone from my office reads this, they all could answer the question for you. I can't tell you how many roof decks we've designed that never get used. Maybe to have that first champagne toast when you first move in, but pretty much never after that. They add a substantial cost to the construction and become a maintenance nightmare.

When you walk through the Hamptons now, do you feel inspired?

The key to your question is "walk." I walk a lot. Often in town (Sag Harbor) but mostly at Gibson Beach or Cedar Point — and not for Instagram selfies! Walking is the best way for me to clear my head and way more productive in coming up with ideas — whether design or business — then sitting at my desk where I'm bombarded with interruptions.

To learn more about Blaze Makoid and his work, visit bmaarchitects.com.

Saunders Stewardship Impact

Aimee Fitzpatrick Martin, The Broker Powering Deals — And The Arts — On The East End

By Ty Wenzel



WHBPAC Executive Director, Julienne Penza-Boone, and Aimee Fitzpatrick Martin. Photo by Christine Alford

James Lane Post has partnered with Saunders & Associates to create the series “The Saunders Stewardship Impact.” This is the second installment, featuring Saunders & Associates’ broker, Aimee Fitzpatrick Martin.

In the Hamptons, where high-stakes real estate transactions often unfold behind hedges and gates, Aimee Fitzpatrick Martin has built a reputation on precision, discretion, and an ability to navigate the complexities of waterfront deals with ease. A top broker with Saunders & Associates, she has spent more than 15 years advising a clientele that ranges from Wall Street executives to media figures, guiding them through purchases and sales across Quogue, Westhampton Beach, Remsenburg, East Quogue, and Hampton Bays.

But her influence extends well beyond the closing table. As a member of the board of directors at the Westhampton Beach Performing Arts Center and an active leader within the Westhampton Rotary Club, Fitzpatrick Martin has become a central figure in the cultural and civic fabric of the East End. Her commitment to community has earned her some of Rotary’s highest honors, including Rotarian of the Year at both the club and district levels, along with the Paul Harris Fellow Award — recognition typically reserved for those whose impact reaches far beyond their profession.

Before entering real estate, Fitzpatrick Martin was already documenting the lives and homes of the Hamptons’ most notable residents as the creator of the At Home With column for the Southampton Press, with additional bylines in Newsday, the Los Angeles Times, and the Chicago Tribune. That editorial eye — and a background spanning public relations, hospitality, and corporate communications — continues to inform a methodical, highly informed approach to her work today, where even the most complex transactions are handled with a measured, almost editorial clarity.

You’ve built a highly successful career in Hamptons real estate — what drew you personally to become involved

with the Westhampton Beach Performing Arts Center, and why did it feel important to you?

My involvement with the WHBPAC really started as a showgoer who fell in love with the world-class performing arts, music, dance, and cinema programming I was enjoying on a year-round basis. Coincidentally, the WHBPAC was founded as a not-for-profit arts organization in 1997, the same year I moved to the Hamptons. Before real estate, I wrote for the Southampton Press and got to interview many of the top performers who were gracing the stage. I quickly saw what a vital role this 425-seat jewel box of a theater was playing in the community. I also fell in love with the wonderful professionals who were working tirelessly behind the scenes to make all this magic happen. When I was asked to join the board about seven years ago, I jumped at the chance. I wanted to be part of its mission to educate, entertain, and inspire, and shout from the rooftops why this cultural heartbeat of the East End needs our continuing support.

The Hamptons is often associated with luxury and lifestyle — how do you see institutions like the Performing Arts Center shaping the cultural identity of the community?

There’s no doubt that the arts have a profound impact on individual and community well-being. Research from the World Health Organization (WHO) shows that arts engagement has the power to transform lives and foster a healthier, more connected society and quality of life.

The WHBPAC is widely known for its arts education programs and community partnerships that reach diverse audiences regardless of socio-economic status. Annually, 10,000 students from across Long Island come to the theater to see curriculum-connected shows from around the world. For many of these students, it’s their first exposure to live theater.



Aimee Fitzpatrick Martin. Photo courtesy Saunders & Associates

The theater also runs classes and camps for arts learners ages 5 to 99, all of which culminate in performances on stage, whether it’s showstopping musical productions, “Up-beat,” a class for differently-abled students, or “Melodies & Memories,” a landmark music and theater program for seniors 65 or better.

Inclusivity and community partnerships are vital to the mission of the theater. This year, in partnership with Organización Latino Americana (OLA), the theater is bringing comedian Pedro Gonzalez to perform Spanish and English language shows on May 30. The theater is also joining with the Butterfly Effect Project to co-present a Marvin Gaye Experience on September 5.

This summer, the PAC’s Main Stage has a full lineup of top talent, including Jared Freid, Darren Criss, Matteo Bocelli, Kelli O’Hara, Chris Botti, and JB Smooove.

As someone who understands the Hamptons market at a very high level, do you think buyers today are placing more value on access to arts and culture when choosing where to live?

I do. We’re lucky to have the offerings of so many arts organizations right here in the Hamptons. Besides the PAC, we’re only 15 minutes to the Suffolk Theater in Riverhead and less than an hour to the Bay Street Theatre in Sag Harbor and Guild Hall in East Hampton. And with the opening of the Sunset Theater in Westhampton Beach and the Southampton Playhouse, we have more local access to first-run movies and even IMAX. If that’s not enough, Broadway is only 90 minutes away.

You’ve spent years advising clients on building not just homes, but lifestyles — how does your work with the arts influence the way you think about what makes a place truly livable?

The performing arts have a positive impact on communities that extends far beyond the stage. It fosters social connections and a desirable lifestyle where you can enjoy the beach, local shops, and the farmers market during the day, then dine at a critically-acclaimed restaurant on Westhampton Beach’s Main Street before attending a world-class show at the PAC. The arts are always an inherent component of the health of an economy. My clients realize they have everything they need right here, west of the canal.

You’ve also been recognized for your leadership with the Westhampton Rotary Club — how has that experience shaped your perspective on community involvement and responsibility?

I’ve been involved with the Westhampton Rotary Club for almost ten years and am honored to serve on its board. “Service Above Self” is the principal motto of Rotary International and is based on a commitment to volunteer service and prioritizing community needs over personal interests. It was a real honor to be named the Club’s 2018 Rotarian of the Year, 2024 District 7255 Rotarian of the Year, and a recipient of the Paul Harris Fellow Award, the highest award a Rotarian can receive.

Our club works hard to raise money for student scholarships; support the efforts of other non-profits, feed the homeless, support a local

food pantry, keep local roadways clean, and support the efforts of Camp Pa-Qua-Tuck, a local camp for disabled children. Every spring, I chair a fundraising event at the PAC that’s always fun. We had a psychic one year, an Elvis and Frank Sinatra show, and this year we’re having five top comedians perform on Saturday, May 2, at 8 PM. With what’s going on in the world, we all need a laugh!

Your career has been built on precision, negotiation, and results. How does that mindset translate into your philanthropic work, if at all?

That old adage, “If you want something done, ask a busy person,” is so true. Real estate is definitely a 24/7 business, but if you believe in something, you make time for it and make it happen. Negotiation is part of volunteering, whether it’s asking a performer to give a better non-profit rate, to working with club members on coordinating schedules for speakers.

What’s something about the Performing Arts Center that people might not realize whether it’s the impact it has locally or the work happening behind the scenes?

People should know how fiscally responsible the PAC is. An impressive 80 cents out of every dollar they raise goes directly to main stage programming. The average is only 65 cents. The theater is so lucky to have a talented powerhouse like Julienne Penza-Boone as its Executive Director. It’s incredible to me that Julienne and her hard-working team of only eight full-time staffers can oversee 50 main stage productions a year, along with summer camps and after-school programs, an Arts Academy programming for 10,000 students, a World Cinema Series, and so much more. The reputation of the theater and its staff is the reason 100 volunteers want to be part of its success.

A fun factoid about the theater that many

people don’t know is that the last row of the balcony would be considered center orchestra at Carnegie Hall. All seats are great seats at the PAC.

In your view, what role should successful professionals especially in industries like real estate play in supporting the communities they work in?

No doubt, real estate is a stressful business. I read that 94% of volunteers report improved moods and a stronger sense of purpose. I think that’s very true. In addition to supporting the needs of a community, volunteerism builds teamwork and can open doors for new opportunities and friendships.

The Hamptons continues to evolve rapidly. How important is it to preserve and invest in cultural institutions as that change accelerates?

It’s very important. That’s why the PAC will soon be announcing the expansion of the theater to better address the changing needs of the community. Details will soon be announced!

Oh wow. On a personal level, what has this work given back to you? Has it changed the way you see your career or your place in the community?

Helping to address the changing needs of the community truly gives my life greater purpose. I’ve met amazing people and made great friends along the way. I’m a worker bee at heart, and hopefully I can make a difference in some small way. I encourage everyone reading this to find a cause that matters to them and start volunteering. You won’t regret it!

Learn more about Fitzpatrick Martin by visiting hamptonsrealestate.com.



Aimee Fitzpatrick Martin at WHBPAC. Photo by Laura Dalessandro

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