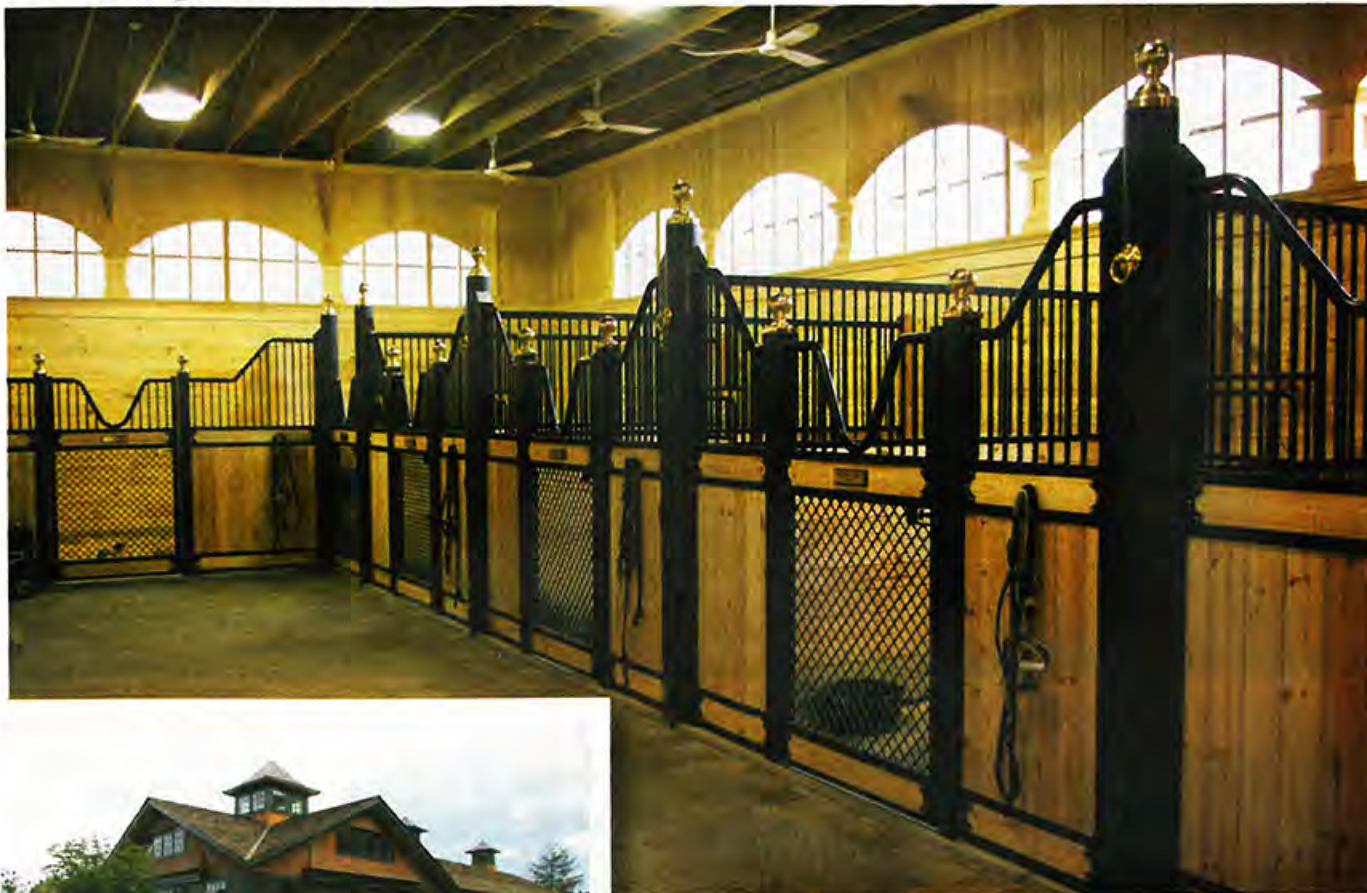


# OLD TOWN BARN

Pawling, New York

By Susan Winslow



"I've never met a barn I didn't like," says Dave Zublin with a smile. As the owner of Old Town Barns in Pawling, New York, Zublin has seen his fair share of them since he founded the company in 1982. He has built or renovated hundreds of barns in that time, from New England to the Mid Atlantic. Zublin brings the same energy and enthusiasm to each new project, whether it is a modest two-stall backyard barn, or a magnificent multi-million dollar riding arena complex decked out with luxuries such as a reconstructed antique bar or sixteenth century stone fireplace. Zublin says, "I enjoy the collaborative process, working with each of my clients to help them realize their dreams and helping them find ways to create a space that works for their specific needs and budget." Old Town Barns specializes in building barns, riding arenas and accessory buildings, but they are experts in barn renovation as well, and Zublin's path to the founding of Old Town Barns is as interesting as some of the barn projects he has worked on.

Zublin followed his education in architecture with a stint as an architect, but the call of the outdoors was too strong to keep him in an office job. He recalls, "I love architecture, but I missed the physical activity of being outdoors and working with my hands. I owe that to my father, who believed in the value of an honest day's work. He would say to me, 'You do a job, you do it well. You work hard, and when you get tired, you work harder.' He was a powerful influence on me, and the lessons he instilled in me about honesty, integrity and pride in a job well done are the cornerstones on which I based my company." Zublin has always been a hard worker, from summers spent on oil rigs along the Gulf Coast to chasing the building boom to Texas in the 1970s, where he learned the art of framing from an old-time carpenter who shared stories and gave him lessons in life during lunch breaks. It was in Texas that Dave met his wife, Donna. The couple decided to follow their dream of living and skiing in Colorado while they were still young, and the three years Zublin spent skiing at Vail were some of the most memorable in his life. Those special years are commemorated by an enormous poster of the mountain that graces his office wall. He explains, "That poster brings a smile to my face every time I look at it. I was skiing on that mountain 115 days of the year. The people, the beauty of Vail and the skiing...it was all just amazing." That experience gave Zublin the confidence to pursue his dreams,

which eventually led to the founding of Old Town Barns.

Returning to Donna's home state of New York, Zublin turned his boundless energy and focus toward building barns, where his love of the outdoors, architecture and building came together in Old Town Barns. As word spread about his skill, straightforward honesty and ability to work well with clients, the business grew. He says, "I am so blessed to do what I do. Barns represent the meeting of form and function, and they are a true example of American art. The interesting thing about barns is that a barn can be just as beautiful in its most simple form as it can be with a lot of extra detail." He laughs and continues, "I've met a lot of people who are more excited about their barns than they are about their house. I understand that. Whether someone has saved up for years to build a small shelter for their horses or they have the means to build a full-scale, top-of-the-line equine facility, I enjoy helping them realize their vision."

Zublin takes his role as designer and builder seriously. He listens to his clients and works closely with them to give them what they want in a thoughtful, functional, cost-effective way, from site preparation to the final latch on the stall doors. "My background in architecture, framing and building gives me the ability to assess each project from a number of different angles. With a barn, like any structure, you get what you pay for. I want each of my projects to bring a smile to their owner's face every time they drive up the driveway, and the fact that these buildings will still be functional a hundred years from now and beyond means a lot to me."

Zublin is constantly striving for quality and innovation, including the development of a unique window-in-a-Dutch door that has been copied by many other barn companies. With characteristic tongue in cheek humor, he says, "Imitation is the sincerest form of flattery." Each of the barns built by Old Town is constructed to meet and exceed safety requirements such as wind and snow loads. Zublin also has a broad understanding of the unique needs of horses and horse owners, stating, "Here in the Northeast, we experience vast temperature swings. In the winter, we want our barns to be snug, but if a barn isn't properly ventilated, that can lead to respiratory problems in horses. So, we design and place the barn to make the most of the prevailing natural conditions on each site. Good southern exposure makes for a warmer, more comfortable barn in the winter, and careful consideration of the prevailing winds in the summer can make for a much cooler living space for the horses during those hot months. The effective use of northern light can help lower lighting costs with indoor arenas in the winter."

Old Town Barns handles everything from site development



to lightning arrester systems to arena footing and final landscaping, and the property owners can be as hands-on or hands-off as they wish. Zublin recalls an executive from a well-known rock and roll magazine who would head out to the work site from the city three nights a week to help the Old Town team build his barn. He says, "We had his tool belt waiting for him, and he would come out and pound nails with us. It was relaxing for him and he had some great stories for us. It was a lot of fun. Working with the property owners and our team at Old Town is a big part of what makes this so much more than just a job for me. And I can't say enough about Matt Ross, our Senior Project Coordinator, who has been with us for ten years." Matt is a highly organized member of the Old Town Team, with years of experience managing projects of various sizes.

Zublin leads his team through example, and this energetic dynamo can

be found hard at work whenever inspiration strikes, even as early as 4:00 in the morning. He explains, "It's pretty simple. I love what I do and I can't wait to get up and get going every day." He is also excited about the addition of his son, Dylan, as a full-time member of the Old Town team in the spring of 2011, when he graduates with a degree in architecture. Dylan has grown up in the business, and he will bring to Old Town Barns a strong background in business with a master's degree in business and finance, as well as computer assisted drafting (CAD) skills. CAD, accompanied with other computer modeling programs, will give Old Town clients the ability to do a virtual, three-dimensional walk-through of their barn project before the first nail is ever driven. "This cutting edge technology is another tool we can use to ensure that our clients get the barn they want,"

says Zublin.

Customer satisfaction is the hallmark of the company, and Zublin offers the following advice to anyone considering building. "Make your wish list, and be realistic about your budget. Consider everything from the interior to exterior, utilities, plumbing, paint, roofing and final site work. When choosing a builder, find someone you click with and be sure to check references. Go to a work site and even better, visit a project he did, say, ten years ago to see how it has held up." Whether you are considering bringing your horses home to their own little barn behind the house or creating a full-service, top-of-the-line barn and arena with all the bells and whistles, Old Town Barns can make those dreams come true. For more information, Old Town Barns is on Facebook, and Zublin can be reached at: [www.oldtownbarns.com](http://www.oldtownbarns.com), P.O. Box 36, Pawling, New York 12564. Phone: 845-855-1450; FAX: 845-855-0502. ■