



Michael O'Rourke of O'Rourke Construction is committed to being the best at what he does

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Growing up in Westhampton, Michael O'Rourke often watched his father help build the jetties that protrude from the South Shore. His mother invested their savings in local real estate—buying, renovating and renting houses—and O'Rourke and his brothers helped out with the renovations, gradually learning the construction trade.

From these formative years, O'Rourke became infused with his family's strong will, penchant for hard work and determination to produce high-quality projects. In the last 22 years, O'Rourke Construction has become a leader in all phases of construction on the East End of Long Island, including renovations, additions and new construction, in both the residential and commercial sectors. His Hamptons homes range from Victorian getaway cottages, to sprawling Dutch farmhouse-style mansions.

"I keep my work to the quality and level of detail that my clients demand and deserve," said O'Rourke, who limits his firm's workload to about eight projects per year. "I am building properties for the upper echelon, the captains of industry and the most demanding people on the Island."

O'Rourke homes have been featured in House and Garden, House: Lifestyle of the Island and House Beautiful Magazines. Sotheby's has displayed O'Rourke homes exclusively on the cover of their Real Estate Journal.

As a young adult, O'Rourke briefly considered a career in professional football. He went to college in Colorado, garnering All-American honors in football while earning a business degree.

"I was a free-agent for the [Denver] Broncos at one time," said O'Rourke. But soon after training camp, he realized that a career in professional football would exact an immense physical toll on his body in later life. "There are some guys that can't walk from here to there without pain," he says. "I didn't want that."

Still, O'Rourke pursued an active lifestyle (skiing, riding dirt bikes) as his interests shifted back to a business career. While in college, O'Rourke had taken a job as an ironworker to make extra money, building storage silos as a "Rod buster." "Rod busters take thick reinforced rebar steel and bend and tie it up as the silos go up and up," he explains. "You have to be quick. And it's tough work."

After college, O'Rourke stayed in Colorado, starting his own business in the steel industry—lured by "the adrenaline rush and hard work." But eventually, he returned to Westhampton and took construction jobs building decks.

Soon after, he was doing all types of home renovations, and gradually the business grew into O'Rourke Construction. He garnered several key jobs, working on the houses of many high-profile residents on the East End, sometimes building a second or third home for an individual client. His innovative homes include a scale reproduction of the historic Coast Guard Lifesaving Station in Quogue.

To maintain his design standards and attention to fine details, O'Rourke employs leading architects as well as a crew of experienced craftsmen who have been in the building trades for decades. While running a constantly demanding business, he is also involved in several community and civic activities, including support of the Quogue Wildlife Refuge.

Ultimately, O'Rourke's life-long philosophy comes down to this: If you want to take risks, you must train to be the best.

"No matter what I do whether it's surfing, skiing, motor biking or building, I make a commitment to be the best," he said. "If I take on the biggest job or the highest mountain, I know that my training and experience allows me to complete my goals—and usually exceed them."

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O'Rourke recently raised \$2,000 for the wildlife refuge by designing a birdhouse replica of the Coast Guard reproduction house, which was sold in a silent auction to benefit the refuge. The birdhouse was purchased by John and Wendy Cooney, the current owners of the Coast Guard house, who bid on the replica, John Cooney says, "because the birdhouse is a work of art, like the house I live in."

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