

MODERN farmhouse style™

FRESH LOOKS
FROM RURAL ROUTES
TO CITY STREETS

LESS
CLUTTER,
MORE
CALM

CREATE CHARACTER

VINTAGE FINDS

HANDCRAFTED DETAILS

SUBTLE COLOR



GET THE CURB APPEAL
YOU'VE ALWAYS WANTED

CONTAINER GARDENS
FIT FOR A FARMHOUSE



this photo: The new timber-frame family room, furnished with plenty of seating, flows freely into the kitchen.

A suburban
Boston couple
transforms a
tired Colonial
Revival into a
contemporary
farmhouse
that embraces
family life and
surrounding
vistas.



split PERSONALITY

WRITER Fred Albert **PHOTOGRAPHER** Jared Kuzia **STYLIST** Karin Lidbeck-Brent



THE MOMENT THEY SAW THE LISTING, IT WAS CLEAR

to Ryan and Jenna Arnold they had found their future home. The 8-acre property in Boxford, Massachusetts, easily charmed the couple with its undulating green hills that cascade down to a tranquil pond and tree-lined vistas of the valley beyond. “We both loved the view,” says Jenna, mother to teen sons Tyson and Jack. “But the house didn’t work for our family.”

The 2001 Colonial Revival Cape Cod was solid but predictable, with knotty pine walls and cloistered rooms that didn’t measure up to the drama of the setting. For the Arnolds, the goal was an update. “We wanted to keep the farmhouse style but modernize it,” Ryan says.

For the project, the family tapped architects Benjamin Nutter and Rick Bernard, who offered a contemporary vision for the home—one that preserved the period front facade but updated the rear with sleeker finishes and larger windows to take advantage of the vistas. “It transitions from a more

traditional Colonial Revival on the entry side to a more contemporary New England farmhouse facing the rear,” Nutter says.

Inside, the family leaned into a modern, open floor plan for public areas, eschewing formal living and dining rooms for more casual, family-oriented spaces. They replaced the malnourished family room with a muscular, timber-frame space anchored by a wall where fieldstone wraps both a TV and a fireplace. A new poolside living area, outfitted

above: In the expanded family room, a Mak & Co. sofa table and round stools sidle up to a couch slipcovered in an easy-care performance fabric. The floors are wide-plank engineered French oak; the ceiling and beams are Douglas fir. **opposite:** The revamped mudroom features individual cubbies for each family member. “They are a lifesaver,” homeowner Jenna Arnold says. Sporting equipment is stashed in the concealed closet at right.



• LESSON 5 •
farm made
MODERN

In a secluded setting, window coverings for privacy are unnecessary. The lack of them lets black-frame windows lend a graphic punch to white-wall public spaces.





with another hearth and heated floors that extend the alfresco room's season, is a family favorite. "Even when it's 40 degrees out, I'll sit by the fire with a blanket around me and watch a football game," Ryan says.

Builder Steve Howell made space for a new powder room and pantry by removing an awkward fireplace, and he eliminated the country pine kitchen in favor of a modern space with farmhouse elements like snow-white Shaker cabinets and walls covered in nickel-gap siding. "I just wanted it bright and white," says Jenna, who nevertheless succumbed to Ryan's suggestion to paint the island black. "It was difficult to pull the trigger on that," she says, "but we like it!"

A trio of windows along the sink wall affords unrestricted views of the landscape and wildlife—turkeys, coyotes, and foxes—roaming the acreage. Reflecting on the pastoral panorama, Jenna heaves a contented sigh and says, "It's an adventure every day."

For resources, see page 96.



opposite: Jenna banished upper cabinets in favor of wood shelves in the kitchen and adjacent pantry. "I just like the openness," she says. **top:** The dining area is open to the kitchen, a change from the old floor plan, and sports new nickel-gap paneling. The island was finished with a matte-black industrial paint sealed with a top coat that's velvety to the touch; the color echoes the windows and doors throughout the house. **above:** Originally designed by Royal Barry Wills Associates, a New England firm revered for its Colonial Revival Capes, the house was updated with new windows, white paint, and a more linear approach. A garage (right) and gymnasium (far left) bracket the 8,555-square-foot residence.

The rear of the house is more contemporary than the front, with larger windows and wider siding. Standing-seam metal roofs distinguish some of the additions from the original structure at center.



“A LOT OF OUR CLIENTS
WANT TO PRESENT A MORE
TRADITIONAL NEW ENGLAND
HOME TO THE STREET.
GIVEN THE CHANCE TO TAKE
ADVANTAGE OF A VIEW LIKE THIS,
THEY PREFER MORE GLASS
ON THE BACK.”

—architect Benjamin Nutter







“WE WANTED
TIMBER FRAMING
AND THINGS LIKE
THAT THAT WERE
GOING TO CHANGE
THE STYLE OF
THE HOME AND
UPDATE IT A BIT.”

—homeowner Ryan Arnold

opposite: The architects tucked an outdoor living area next to the family room. The rugged timber-frame structure overlooks the pool. **above and right:** With a fireplace, built-in grill and kitchen, TV, and heated bluestone floors, the alfresco room is outfitted to be the family's favorite hangout. “We use it the majority of the year, except when it's bitterly cold out,” Ryan says.





opposite: In the primary bedroom, a tall upholstered headboard anchors the bed, which is dressed in bedding from Coyuchi. Douglas fir beams and paneling were added to the existing room to simulate the timber-frame construction elsewhere in the house. *this photo:* A freestanding tub is perfectly perched to capture bucolic views.



PERFECT HARMONY

The house presents a traditional face streetside, but it's more contemporary in back. The architects utilized a few tricks to ensure a smooth transition.

PANE REMEDY. Architects Benjamin Nutter and Rick Bernard chose multipane windows but made the rear-facing openings larger. Since the thickness of the muntins is the same, the back windows look more modern—while still relating to the windows in front.

SIDE BY SIDE. Both the front and back of the house are sided in clapboard, but the architects doubled the reveal of each board in the rear. "It's a more modern look," Nutter says. The existing siding was augmented with a composite that looks like wood when painted.

COMPARE & CONTRAST. The garage and gymnasium were painted a contrasting gray and topped with standing-seam metal roofs to distinguish them from the rest of the house and help break up the home's mass.