

AMERICAN PASTORAL

A beautiful mix of rustic and modern, classic and contemporary, rough-hewn beams and sleek art glass



Text by Nancy L. Claus
Photography by Scott Francis

DEEP in the heart of Northern Westchester's horse country, up a gently curving drive edged by stone walls, through stately wooden gates, a pastoral tableau unfolds before you: the barn perched on a hill, the two Belted Galloways (Lillian and La Fluer) gently lowing in the pasture, the three Jacob sheep (Pokey, Miss May, and Panda) keeping a wary distance. The main house below, a clever, contemporary interpretation of an American farmhouse, looks out over the Titicus Reservoir and affords panoramic countryside views.

"The family originally wanted to buy a barn and convert it into a weekend and summer home," says Mark Stumer, principal of Mojo Stumer Associates, and the architect who designed both the interior and exterior of the home. "Since an old barn wasn't available, we created a new home that had the same characteristics as a classic farmhouse." But with some decidedly modern twists.



While the front of the house was designed to evoke a barn—complete with silo—the back has a completely different look with walls of glass to take full advantage of the views. “We had fun with the silo,” Stumer says. “It became the pivot point for creating the barn-like feel, which is continued with the barn doors on the garage.” The silo isn’t just for show. Neatly housed inside is a curving staircase with a vertical row of stacked windows echoing the look of a traditional silo ladder, each pane perfectly framing a view: the sheep here, cows there, lovely country views everywhere.

When the property was purchased, it came with covenants that limited the height of the house. “We designed the house with multiple ridges and levels to break up what would have been a long, low elevation because of the code constraints,” Stumer explains. The long site also dictated the flow of the interior, with the public rooms having full views to the back overlooking the countryside. “We don’t separate architecture from interior design,” Stumer says. “As we work on the architecture, we are already planning the interior, so design elements from the exterior are recurring elements within: the barn doors, barn beams, floors made of reclaimed wood and stone.”



(Previous spread) Walls of glass in the back of the house take advantage of the views.

(Top left) Ample seating at the back of the house; steps lead down to the infinity pool.

(Left) The kitchen’s focal point is the arched cast-iron stove hood over a massive Viking range; copper pots hang from a reclaimed barn beam.

(Opposite page, from top left clockwise) Oil on canvas of horses by Joe Andoe in the living room; family room off the kitchen; a triptych of pears (*One Brown Pear*, *One Green Pear*, and *One Yellow Pear*, oils on canvas by Tom Seghi) cover one wall in the dining room.





An open mezzanine at the top of stairs is a perfect spot to admire art in the living room below, including an oil on canvas depiction of a cow by Joe Andoe and a glass sculpture, commission by Sean M. Mercer. Reclaimed wood beams and stone are found throughout the house.



The gentlemen's farm motif is also brought out through art: oil paintings of farm animals by Joe Andoe adorn the walls, while metal roosters and chickens perch on ledges and mantles along with antique weather vanes. Juxtaposed is an enviable collection of modern art glass by such notables as Sean M. Mercer and William Morris. At every turn, one sees intriguing glass interpretations: an antelope head, nautical knots, a fanciful fish sculpture dripping inside and out with tiny fish.

The heart of the house was designed to be reminiscent of an Old World country kitchen—but naturally, with all the modern amenities, like a glass-enclosed wine cellar and a massive six-burner Viking range topped by a custom-built arched cast-iron stove hood. Gleaming copper pots hang from an old barn beam over the island; the cozy breakfast nook looks out over the great beyond.

(This page) The front of the house was designed to evoke a barn; neatly housed inside the silo is a curving staircase with windows stacked to look like a traditional silo ladder. The glass sculpture on the pedestal is titled *Arna Buffalo Situla*, by William Morris.

(Opposite page, top) The master bath has a soaking tub and a custom stone vanity.

(Opposite page, bottom) The ground-floor guest bath features a copper sink and walls; reclaimed beams front the vanity.



A staircase off the room leads down to a recreation room and up to the master suite, with a two-sided fireplace between the bed and sitting rooms, and a Jacuzzi just steps away on a deck overlooking a butterfly garden. Down the hall toward the children's room, sliding barn doors open to pristine white bathrooms. Their playroom has a farm mural covering one wall while the TV is tucked away in an armoire that looks like a green barn.

The property outside—so large it takes two crews a full day just to mow the lawns—is just as engaging as the house is inside. A giant stainless-steel rooster marks the entry to a separate guesthouse with its own private stone patio. Down the hill, a pool house and infinity pool look out onto, well, infinity. Even the barn is stylish, with herringbone-patterned brick floors and immaculate stalls. Beyond the paddocks is a fire pit where the family and guests toast s'mores and camp out on summer nights after watching movies on an outdoor projection screen (although, truth be told, some of the kids sneak back into the house before dawn).

In the end, the family got everything they wanted: a farmhouse in the country filled with cherished collections, a working green farm with a stable of heirloom-breed livestock, and a view that goes on forever—an American Dream. 🏡