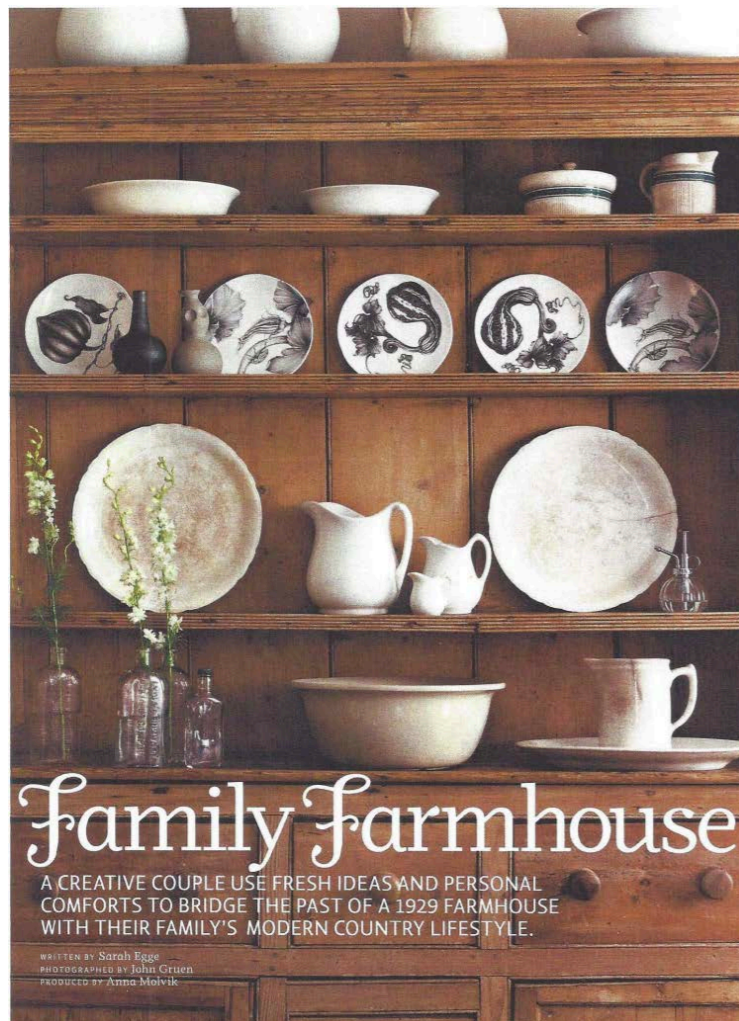




OPPOSITE Heide Hendricks and Rafe Churchill, who call a visit to a Shaker community "a fun date," admired the spartan charm of this flea market hutch. "We were so excited about it," she says. "We bought it and then thought, What are we going to put in there?"
THIS PHOTO Classic and crisp, a white picket fence defines the backyard of the family's 1929 house, which crowns a hill on Connecticut farmland.



Family Farmhouse

A CREATIVE COUPLE USE FRESH IDEAS AND PERSONAL COMFORTS TO BRIDGE THE PAST OF A 1929 FARMHOUSE WITH THEIR FAMILY'S MODERN COUNTRY LIFESTYLE.

WRITTEN BY Sarah Edge
 PHOTOGRAPHY BY John Gruen
 PRODUCTION BY Anna Molvik

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AT THE END OF THE DAY, A PINK-GOLD SUN MELTS OVER THE ROLLING HILLS OF NORTHWEST CONNECTICUT

as chestnut horses munch grass in front of a peaked red barn. It's a picturesque scene that Heide Hendricks, husband Rafe Churchill, and their children Hollis, 12, and Rufus, 8, get to enjoy from their porch.

The family claimed this enviable view in 2011 when they purchased a 1929 farmhouse tucked between a horse farm and a land trust. The house, though well cared for, was spare and antiquated. "A family of real farmers had lived there many years," Heide says. "It had been built economically with not a lot of flourishes, including the porch." Heide, an interior designer, and Rafe, an architect and builder, wanted to preserve what they call its "farmhouse simple" style, with modifications to suit their family. Rafe designed the porch deep enough for comfy seats and added doors to access it from the TV room or kitchen. They updated mechanical systems and gutted the kitchen, but saved the original plaster walls and interior doors, which they stripped and waxed.

Subtle paint colors with names like Raccoon Fur and Shaded White create a neutral backdrop for Heide's family-friendly style, which marries the weathered finish of a scrubbed-pine table with the strong profile of a secondhand wing chair. "When I look for pieces, it's often budget-driven, of course, but I look for pieces with character, which I lighten up with contemporary patterns and fabrics," Heide says. "I like things in their original condition and with clean, spare lines."

During the renovation, Heide and Rafe widened doorways between rooms but kept the center-hall floor plan. "We just love that, because we can be in separate rooms but all be together," Heide says. The walls provide space for personal artwork, which includes portraits by Heide's father. Outside, the family raises chickens and plants garden beds. And they erected a house for a pair of purple martins. "The birds have returned a couple years in a row, so we're hopeful for this year," Heide says. And she, Rafe, and the kids will be on the porch to welcome them.

ABOVE LEFT Muted wall and trim colors let Heide and Rafe show off artwork, such as paintings by artist friends, family snapshots, flea market finds, and these portraits by Heide's father that hang over the sofa and in the hallway. Heide chose the new tufted sofa by looking for the clean, straight-forward lines she favors in antiques. **ABOVE MIDDLE** Rafe, Heide, and their children, Hollis and Rufus, enjoy farm living from high on a hill in Connecticut. **ABOVE RIGHT** An old school ball welcomes visitors down the brick path to Heide and Rafe's back porch, which they added in 2011.



POINT OF VIEW

“We have a respect for the past, but we’re not fussy. This is not the type of house that I’m going to care if the kids end up eating their chocolate chip cookies on the couch. It feels good and it feels real.”

—HEIDE HENDRICKS, HOMEOWNER

ABOVE LEFT When they redid the kitchen, Rafe built shelves to display bakery tins labeled with artwork created by Heide’s father, a painter. **LEFT** Rafe designed the space as a casual, unfitted farmhouse kitchen—true to the period of the house, but with updates like a dishwasher and storage drawers. The couple used a trick throughout the house to frame the view: They painted mullions in the divided-light windows deep charcoal. “In effect, they disappear when you’re looking out,” Heide says. **OPPOSITE** The family sits at this cozy round table for every meal. Heide likes the sculptural mix of ladderback, spindle, and wing chairs, which she sometimes pulls over to the fireplace. The antler chandelier came from a Montana artisan, but she and Rafe bought other horns and antlers at antiques stores. “We love their ivory and gray coloring, and that they feel reverential,” she says.

STYLE SECRET

“At least once a week, I’m out looking. I’m an addict. If I find something I love, I buy it. My house is my laboratory, so things are always changing. The kids have gotten used to this concept.”

—HEIDE HENDRICKS



1 “It’s an old farmhouse, so some of the rooms are quite dark,” Heide says. To keep spaces, such as this bathroom, as light as possible, she uses luminous butter yellow to brighten walls and dresses windows sparsely. **2** The fluid line of the new black headboard and a sleek modern lamp contrast with the rustic bedside table. **3** Rafe keeps tags and nature finds in an old mail sorter on his desk. **4** Heide, who grew up in a large family, wanted twin beds for her kids. “It feels like the ultimate luxury to have an extra bed,” she says. Modern mattresses and box springs are slightly wider than the vintage frames, so she had ticking covers made for the box springs. **5** In the master bedroom, Heide combined warm rags that have strong pattern but muted colors, weathered tables in their original finish, oil paintings, and a handmade box.



Raising Chicks
You can adopt backyard birds with these 10 tips:

HOOD UP THE KIDS. Adults and kids alike should wear long sleeves and pants, and use gloves when handling the birds.

START SMALL. Buy a few chicks from a reputable source. Start with a mix of breeds and colors.

KEEP IT CLEAN. Keep the brooder clean and change the bedding regularly.

WATCH THE DIET. In general, feed the chicks a high-quality, balanced diet.

MANAGE THE BOUNTY. The birds will lay eggs, but you should only use the eggs for hatching if you have a plan for the extra birds.