

New Home, Old Roots

This Kentucky farmhouse puts the fun in funky with colorful décor and a collection of vintage finds.

BY JESSIE YOUNT

PHOTOGRAPHY BY KRISTIN VANZANT
STYLED BY LAUREN ELDER

The Harris' love to spend time on their wraparound porch, so the house was outfitted with lots of doors for easy access to the outside.

How do you freshen up traditional farmhouse style in 2019? With modern twists and lovable quirks, of course. That's exactly how designer Lauren Elder of Lauren Elder Interiors accomplished this well-balanced and beautiful residence in rural Kentucky.

PRESERVING HISTORY

Though the homeowners, Jeff and Sherrie Harris, have spent a lot of time in Nashville, Tennessee, they ultimately felt compelled to return to their roots, and their extended family, in Owensboro, Kentucky.

But the location of the house is not its most meaningful feature. Lauren helped Jeff and Sherrie incorporate pieces of their past into their brand new home. In fact, the couple owns two family farms, and they sprinkled the wood from one of their barns throughout each room. "The wood creates a warm and cozy feeling, and it transforms the house into a home," Lauren says.

This simple grooved panel door represents understated elegance at its finest. And with the bathroom hidden from view, the eye attracts to the antique mirror that hangs to the side.



The mixture of reclaimed wood, white cabinetry, glossy countertops and stainless steel appliances in the kitchen encapsulates the image of this perfectly balanced farmhouse.

Tip

MIX AND MATCH YOUR FURNITURE MATERIALS. THERE'S NO RULE THAT SAYS YOU CAN'T USE RATTAN, WICKER AND INDUSTRIAL METAL ALL IN ONE ROOM





This pretty floral curtain is just one example of Sherrie's collection of wonderful and wacky fabrics.

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Another stunning use of wood is in the kitchen. Amidst the crisp white walls, the range hood makes a serious statement. "The hood was the last thing to go up in the kitchen, and we redid it three times," Lauren says. "A hood is an essential part of every kitchen, obviously, and by using reclaimed wood, we were able to create this really cool, old-timey spectacle." The personal history of the wood also gives the new home old character and helps tell the family's story.

A ROOM OF ONE'S OWN

Though Jeff and Sherrie love spending time together, they also like to have their own private spaces. One of Sherrie's favorite spots is her bathroom, which is hers alone. Lauren designed it as a female papering haven, with pale pink cabinets and hexagon tile flooring that were individually placed by hand.

Meanwhile, Jeff's office makes for a perfect and comfortable man cave. Lauren made



room for all of Jeff's memorabilia in the office, from his photographs and artwork to his magazines and retro lunch boxes. The room reflects Jeff's laid-back personality, and it offers a fantastic view of the property and its pastures.

Additionally, the couple set aside the loft of the home for their four grandchildren, and decorated it to their liking, complete with colorful carpets and Matilda Jane fabrics. "Jeff and Sherrie absolutely love their grandchildren," Lauren says. "When you visit your grandparents as a child, you might be tucked away in a spare bedroom. Not these kids—they have a playroom around the corner, too."

Lauren sought to maintain balance between the old and the new. The dining room—the center of the home—combines shiplap walls with an out-of-this-world chandelier for a fun end result.





How do take something that looks old and make it new? When it comes to traditional-style cabinets, all it takes is a pop of color to make it feel modern and fresh.

A RAINBOW OF COLOR

Lauren and Sherrie used countless colors in this farmhouse, but it doesn't feel overwhelmed. Here are a few tips and tricks to help you refresh your home with a sprinkling of shades.

- **EMBRACE NEUTRALS.** Before you select your vibrant hues, consider your backdrop. You can easily introduce splashes of hot pink or neon orange within a calm environment of whites and creams.
- **USE DARKS SPARINGLY.** You can use subtle touches of brown, navy and black to transition from one space to another. These darker shades act as a palette cleanser before you step into the next room.
- **ADD POPS OF PASTEL.** Use blue, green and teal for a soothing effect, pink and violet for a romantic allure and orange and yellow for a sunny and upbeat vibe.
- **SPREAD 'EM OUT.** Lauren is a strong believer that the home should reflect its owners, and thus, her rule is thumb is to use what you love, no matter what. If it feels like too much in one or two rooms, just spread it out.
- **MIX AND MATCH.** Use bright hues with muted tones to create eye-catching contrast. But be careful when mixing different levels of saturation, as this can overwhelm the room.
- **HAVE FUN WITH FABRICS.** Use linens, drapes and other textiles to create softer cheer in your home. There are several patterns that speak to farmhouse style, such as paisley, floral and gingham.

While no two rooms are alike, each one blends historic elements with the couple's perky and unequivocally individual sense of style.



The master bedroom's design centers around this classic armoire. "It's the perfect place to hide the TV," Lauren says. "Back in the day, people didn't have TVs, and Sherrie wanted to reflect that."

WORK & PLAY

Lauren describes this project as one of her biggest labors of love. "Sherrie is a collector, so there were a lot of items that she wanted in the home," she says. "But she was also incredibly flexible in the way we used items and colors." For instance, they agreed that the washroom cabinets would be teal. Sherrie loves this color, but Lauren knows it can be loud and overwhelming in abundance. So they compromised by placing the color in a smaller room, and offsetting it with light-colored walls and flooring.

While no two rooms are alike, each one blends historic elements with the couple's perky and unequivocally individual sense of style. "It was so much fun working with Sherrie," Lauren says. "She had vintage cloth that became drapes and antique rugs with amazing patterns." And the creativity didn't end there. Lauren ordered chairs flown in from France and covered in crazy velvet material, adding a touch of glamour to the otherwise traditional farmhouse.

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Tip
TRYING TO PUT MORE FARM INTO YOUR FARMHOUSE? USE TICKING STRIPE, WHICH IS A SIMPLE YET CLASSIC PATTERN.



(above) The master bathroom achieves a timeless look, blending traditional furniture with elegant accents. The claw foot tub is a classic choice, while the eccentric chair is an incredible exception to the traditional ambiance.

(left) "We wanted the armoire to stand out," Lauren says. "We made the rest of room light and bright, but we anchored the space with the dark bed frame and curtain rods."



"The wood creates a warm and cozy feeling, and it transforms the house into a home."

Sherrie has fabrics galore in the loft. Lauren blends patterned quilts with soft linens and bed skirts, creating a space for the grandkids that is both lively and serene.



Tip
TREAT YOUR CEILING LIKE ITS OWN ELEMENT. "WHEN YOU ALTER YOUR CEILING, WHETHER YOU'RE CHANGING THE COLOR OR HEIGHT, YOU'RE DELINEATING A NEW SPACE," LAUREN SAYS.



THE FIFTH WALL

Lauren likes to think of the ceiling as a fifth wall, and indeed, a well-planned ceiling can make all the difference. Below, learn about the different ways to treat a ceiling and discover what works best in your own farmhouse.

- **HIGH VS. LOW.** Vaulted ceilings create a spacious, open-air quality, which is particularly useful in a smaller house. It's also a good choice if you like to play host. However, sometimes homeowners feel that a high ceiling backfires because it makes the house feel too big. So if you're going for a cozy and comforting vibe, consider using a low-hanging ceiling instead.
- **PATTERNED VS. PLAIN.** Add pattern and texture to the ceiling to upgrade a room from simple to sophisticated. This design strategy works well in rooms with monochromatic walls and minimalist furniture. On the other hand, rooms with funky furniture or wainscoting can feel overwhelmed by a busy ceiling. But that shouldn't stop you from playing with different shades of color.



(top left) "We knew that we would be sacrificing this space when the architect put elevation on the house," Lauren says. "But we were able to use gothic windows to open up the space." (above) Retro subway tile, vintage mirrors and pastel pink cabinets blend together in Sherrie's personal bathroom.