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Rewriting History

WORKING STRUCTURES BECOME A HOME

AN ICON RENOVATED FOR A FAMILY | A HOUSE BUILT FROM A COLLECTION

INSIDE *CTC&G'S* DESIGN SALON!

Old Meets New After being transported from upstate New York, the 1860s structure was rebuilt with a massive stone chimney, new doors and windows, board and batten siding, cupola and a lead-coated copper roof while still retaining its original simplicity of form. *See Resources.*

Barn of Ages

A VINTAGE BARN FINDS NEW LIFE AS A RUSTIC SPACE FOR ENTERTAINING

BY MINDY PANTIEL | PHOTOGRAPHY BY WOODRUFF-BROWN PHOTOGRAPHY

IT WASN'T THAT LONG AGO THAT BUILDING A BARN

involved corralling your friends and neighbors for a potluck and a barn raising. Today acquiring one of these iconic structures may be just a Google search away. At least that's what architect Doug VanderHorn discovered when his clients requested an antique barn to serve as a rustic setting for entertaining on their six-acre Fairfield County estate. "I used the Internet to search for barns for sale and found several companies that specialize in rescuing old barns," says VanderHorn, who hit pay dirt at heritagebarns.com. "When you find the right structure, the purchase price includes taking the barn apart, fumigation, shipping and reassembling it on site."

In his case, the perfect match, an 1860s model, was located on a farm outside of Albany, New York. "We wanted a barn from the same time period as the original early 1800s Colonial where the homeowners reside," says VanderHorn, noting the owners purchased the property next door and took down a dilapidated house and an unsalvageable barn to make way for the soaring timber-frame structure. "The homeowners took one

Big Red (TOP LEFT) The barn's old doorway opened into the main space that was later transformed into the great room. **All Trussed Up** (BOTTOM LEFT) A combination of hand-hewn and mill-sawn timberwork is typical of the mid 1800s. The timbers were used to form the ceiling of the renovated interior. **Sun Spot** (ACROSS SPREAD) A conservatory from Parish Conservatories in Fairfield was added for contrast and to capture natural light. *See Resources.*

BEFORE PHOTOS (ABOVE LEFT) BY DANIEL PARDY OF HVA

Kitchen Cachet (ABOVE) A custom chestnut wet bar designed to reference a piece of Colonial furniture defines one side of the kitchen, where the antique range hood with original blue paint was salvaged from the main house. **Private Table** (BELOW) Composed of antique timbers, the Cornerstone Builders wine cellar features a beamed ceiling filled with stucco. The doors were designed to reflect the doors of the horse stalls once located in the barn's lower level. **Soaring Ceiling** (OPPOSITE PAGE) A massive stone fireplace anchors the great room. Lewis Mittman Knole sofas are covered in Cowtan & Tout linen velvet. *See Resources.*

look at the pictures and were ready to buy it. But we insisted on a site visit to make sure the timbers had great character."

With the condition issues settled, VanderHorn and project architect Daniel Pardy faced the challenge of accommodating the building to its new locale. "The main open space had an exposed lower level big enough to drive a tractor into," says Pardy. "But the plans for the great room called for it being a few steps above grade, so we omitted the original framework of the lower level and constructed new basement walls onto which the barn was placed."

That maneuver left 3,100 square feet at their disposal, which the architects handily shaped into an open sitting and dining area. Kitchen cabinetry was constructed on-site from reclaimed pine, and guest quarters were tucked into a balcony above the kitchen. Not so easy was dealing with 32-foot ceiling heights. "It's not common to have so much volume in a residential structure. And you don't realize how dramatic the space is going to be until it's all enclosed," says VanderHorn. "Lighting becomes a real challenge because that much wood really absorbs light."

In response, large arch-topped windows flank the massive stone fireplace, and a series of strategically placed windows and a cupola coax additional natural light into the expansive room. In lieu of track lighting, a series of low-voltage fixtures built into the center beam illuminate the timber framing.

Veggie Haven (ABOVE) A Colonial-style potting shed and a wall of Flemish bond brick with a Chippendale gate complement the main house, while creating a backdrop for the vegetable and herb garden adjacent to the barn's pergola. **Wicker Wise** (BELOW) A New Hampshire antique wicker dealer supplied the conservatory furnishings topped with the original fabric. **Al Fresco Dining** (OPPOSITE PAGE) Located on the front entry side of the barn, a pergola-covered patio is the perfect setting for outdoor dining. *See Resources.*

Further brightening the space is a unique plaster wall finish suggested by interior designer Linda Shockley. "Because hay is typically stored in barns, I had the artisans mix hay into the plaster, which created a wonderful texture," says Shockley, who worked with the owners to establish an ambience that incorporated their sophisticated taste while honoring the history of the rustic surroundings. "They are world travelers and had things like a long harvest table and a set of antique English chairs they wanted to use."

The original tapestry upholstery on the chairs drove the selection of luxurious woven fabrics for the reproduction ratchet sofas and the striped velvet that tops the club chairs in the main sitting area. "Beauty was a key consideration, but durability was equally important," says Shockley. "Early on we dubbed the project 'the party barn,' so whatever we chose needed to be comfortable and stand up to wine spills."

An intentional counterpoint to the warm woods and rich colors is the new conservatory. A predominantly glass structure, it provides overflow entertaining space, a connection to the gardens, and reinforces the barn's architectural simplicity. "In order to maintain the barn precedence, there's an intentional lack of detail on both buildings," explains VanderHorn. "Our intent was to have the good feeling of barn, not something that was converted into a house." ■

PHOTOGRAPH BY STACY BASS