

Well-Styled Home

# AMERICAN FARMHOUSE

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A pair of bergère chairs was a roadside find, which home-owner Jennifer Costanzo painted and reupholstered for extra seating. The window seat is oversized and a comfy place to daydream while enjoying the garden view.

# Farming the Suburbs

An architect and designer collaborate to bring fresh farmhouse style to a suburban tract home.

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PHOTOGRAPHY BY STACY ZARIN GOLDBERG

The city of Alexandria, Va., was once farmland owned by George Washington, comprising part of his Mount Vernon plantation. Today, that land is a suburban neighborhood; however, the Costanzo family decided it was time to bring the country roots back to their historically located home.

When architect Christine Kelly came on board the project, the late-1950s home was short on rustic charm. "It was a small, nondescript, split-level tract house," Christine says. "At some point, the prior owners had added a master bedroom to the upper level and put in a breakfast room, but the home was dark and chopped up."

Designer Jennifer Costanzo, her husband Brian and their two kids, had different plans for the home. "The main thing we were looking for in a renovation was to add character," Jennifer says. "We also wanted the house to reflect us, to make it ours."



“What I love the most about our home is that it revolves around family and friends, open spaces and the outdoors.”

Wood beams and an oversized chandelier help bring spatial definition to the open dining area.







**OPPOSITE:** A small set of barn doors covers up the flat-screen TV to provide a clean, finished look in the family room.

**ABOVE:** Nothing says farm style like Mason jars. Jennifer uses them as vases to offset the neutral dining table and runner.

## RETURNING TO THE FARM.

American-farmhouse design has always appealed to the Costanzos, who already live, interact and entertain in the relaxed, casual and family friendly manner so central to farm life. They also wanted to pay homage to their neighborhood's historic roots.

"The idea was to completely open up the back of the house," Christine says of the dining area and family-room extension. The team added large rear windows that connect to the outdoors and bring in plenty of natural light. "We wanted a through-view from the front entry to the backyard," Christine says.

This airy addition, along with a brand-new master suite on the second floor, almost doubled the home's square footage, which now stands at 4,000 square feet. A rustic stone fireplace further defines the family room, along with soaring tongue-in-groove planked cedar ceilings. "I chose a rough-cut cedar for the ceiling finish," Jennifer adds. "I love its color, warmth and texture. It became the jumping-off point for my décor and palette."

## A FARMHOUSE EXTERIOR.

The changes didn't stop inside. The family also gave the exterior a makeover to bolster the farmhouse vibe. One touch was the addition of a wrap-around porch. With its wide, white trim, the porch is the perfect place to sit with a cup of iced tea or lemonade on a sunny afternoon.

The roof and windows also received new treatment. "On the new top floor, we added dormers to keep the roofline low," Christine says. Instead of making the windows uniform, Christine varied their design to make them look aged. "We [chose] double-hung and awning windows to keep things cottage-y, as if the home had evolved over time," she says.





#### MAKING IT FEEL LIKE HOME.

Jennifer is a hands-on crafter, and she did much of the interior-design work herself. Her passion for wood is evident throughout the home's furnishings. She left some wood in its natural state while opting to paint other pieces. Two sets of barn doors, which open to the office and cover the flatscreen TV, were her idea—"space savers, with rustic character," she calls them. Jennifer also designed the built-ins.

The Costanzos used an eclectic mix of new and old furnishings to complete the character of the house. Old family furnishings were given new life—the dining table they inherited from Brian's grandparents got new paint, was distressed and reupholstered to work with the fresh, neutral, rustic décor. The family also purchased several newer pieces appropriate to the style, such as IKEA host-and-hostess wicker dining chairs.

"What I love the most about our home is that it revolves around family and friends, open spaces and the outdoors," Jennifer says. "You don't have to be in the country to have that farmhouse look. You can plunk it right in the suburbs where we are."

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A clever set of barn doors seals off the home office as needed and matches the smaller set in the family room downstairs. Jennifer designed the wraparound desk.

American farmhouse style appealed to the Costanzos, who live in the relaxed, casual and family friendly manner so central to farm life.



The Costanzos painted a paneled ceiling for a softer country element in the master bedroom. The bedroom set was a hand-me-down the couple refinished and repainted to work with their farmhouse style.





A carved newel post, painted risers and natural-wood treads form the new staircase leading up to the added master suite.



Several different styles of windows help the house feel aged and well-loved.

# 10 WAYS TO ADD RUSTIC CHARM TO YOUR HOME

1. **REPURPOSE EVERYTHING**—from old furnishings to found objects.
2. **USE FAMILY PIECES** that are sentimental while incorporating new items for a fresh look.
3. **LOOK AT FURNITURE FOR ITS FORM**, not its finish. A coat or two of paint will solve any finish problems.
4. **REUPHOLSTER WITH TEXTURED FABRICS**, such as burlap and cotton.
5. **ADD CAST-IRON HARDWARE** and decorative elements throughout your home, especially in the kitchen.
6. **INSTALL STATEMENT LIGHT FIXTURES** in a rustic style. Go over-scale where you can.
7. **USE A MIXTURE OF COMFORTABLE PILLOWS** and soft throws to incorporate a homespun feel.
8. **IF YOU CAN, ADD A WINDOW SEAT**. Storage below the seat is a bonus.
9. **INSTALL BARN DOORS** as features that also serve a function.
10. **INCORPORATE JUTE, WICKER** and other warm, woven materials into your décor.