



Old Beams, New Life

A RED BANK DESIGNER'S THOUGHTFUL RENOVATION PRESERVES THE SOUL OF A HISTORIC MAHWAH FARMHOUSE WHILE QUIETLY ADAPTING IT FOR MODERN FAMILY LIFE

BY EMMA FLOYD • PHOTOS BY TORI SIKKEMA



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inny Padula, principal of Red Bank-based Town & Country Design Studio, spent nearly two years renovating this historic Mahwah farmhouse with one goal: to preserve its character while making it more livable for the

modern family. Original wide-plank floors, exposed brick, hand-hewn beams, and a former smokehouse guided every decision.

“You have to respect the historical nature of these spaces,” Padula said. “Every decision started with what was already here.”

That commitment is clear upon first glance. The entryway opens through a doorway framed in original fieldstone, cleaned and left as found, with a hallway view past the adjacent stone wall. Padula left many surfaces untouched, letting the materials and architecture provide visual interest. The smokehouse stands out: the original fireplace sits low and wide, framed by heavy





timber beams above, and the aged brick remains visible.

Elsewhere, the renovation balances the original structure with inviting interiors. In the sitting room, two linen swivel chairs, a round ottoman, and a small side table sit beneath a dramatic brick A-frame, forming a calming nook for reading or quiet reflection. The family room features dark beams, a brick fireplace, and linen sofas with warm wood tones. Built-in shelves keep the space functional without overpowering the architecture, and the room feels lived in, not staged. The formal living room, in the home's oldest section, is more composed. Wide pine floors and a classic white fireplace ground the space. A green velvet sofa adds depth, while a large abstract painting keeps the room from leaning too heavily into traditional. Contemporary art, curated by Brooklyn-based stylist By Kelly Maguire, relaxes spaces that might otherwise feel formal.

Just off the living room, the dining room continues that balance. Whitewashed beams span the ceiling, softening the structure overhead. At the center of the room, a round dark pedestal table grounds the space, while an ornate gold





mirror hangs above the fireplace. The mix of aged wood, polished metal, and painted surfaces creates a room that feels layered without becoming overly formal.

The kitchen is where the renovation feels most contemporary. Padula designed custom cabinetry in a deep blue-grey Benjamin Moore finish with brass hardware, paired with natural stone countertops. The beams running overhead were milled from a tree on the property during the renovation process, tying the room back to the land surrounding the farmhouse. A custom metal range hood with brass trim anchors the space, while a large island with black leather bar stools provides workspace for everyday use.

The breakfast nook off the kitchen was a client priority. Padula designed both together to ensure the area feels like a natural extension rather than an afterthought. A tall cream hutch, a trestle table, and a black iron chandelier define the space. Windows bring in steady light, positioning the nook as a natural gathering spot.



[HOME SPOTLIGHT]

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Upstairs, the primary suite features an upholstered wingback bed, warm wood nightstands, and wide-plank floors. The bath features a warm oak vanity with marble countertops on one side, a freestanding clawfoot tub beneath a bank of windows on the other, and a fully tiled marble shower.

A guest bedroom in the older section of the house features a solid walnut bed frame and an exposed brick chimney stack in the corner. Rather than disguising the irregularities of an older structure, the design acknowledges them and lets those details add character to the room. Across the house, the palette stays warm and grounded, built around wood tones and soft neutrals.

“Clients are asking for warmth, things that feel cozy and comfortable,” said Padula.

Town & Country sources a mix of vintage and modern pieces for each project, and several items here came directly from the farmhouse itself. The older section of the house includes a drop-leaf table, a secretary desk, and a large Welsh dresser filled with transferware plates that look as though they have always belonged there. In some cases, they actually have. Rather than replacing these objects, they are incorporated into the design, allowing the home’s history to remain visible in small, everyday ways.

For Padula, the balance between preservation and livability ultimately defines the project. The farmhouse still reads clearly as a historic home, but it now works for the family who lives there. The renovation does not attempt to freeze the house in a particular moment. Instead, it allows the original materials, proportions, and craftsmanship to continue functioning within a modern household. **1**

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