

ENTERTAINING WITH STYLE

BACK TO THE LAND

ON A WORKING FARM IN TENNESSEE, DESIGNER BARBARA WESTBROOK GIVES A NEW HOUSE THE QUIRKS AND CHARMS OF AN OLD-TIMER—COMPLETE WITH WINDSOR CHAIRS, APRON SINKS, AND COUNTRY MEALS WITH INGREDIENTS FRESH FROM THE FIELDS.

INTERIOR DESIGN **Barbara Westbrook and Elizabeth Hanson**

INTERVIEW **Douglas Brenner**


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In the kitchen breakfast area of a Tennessee farmhouse decorated by Atlanta-based designer Barbara Westbrook, an antique French table can comfortably seat three generations of the owners' family. Its oval top—ringed by Holland & Company's Windsor chairs—eases access to the adjacent back porch. The Prairie Chandelier by Mulligan's radiates rustic charm. **OPPOSITE:** A French carved basket is filled with afternoon snacks. The early-American hooked rug is from Sullivan Fine Rugs.



At the kitchen island, Lee Industries barstools wear slipcovers in Pindler's Jovan fabric. Pratt & Lambert's Wraith coats both walls and cabinets, which also have a glaze that was hand-applied by Morgan Creek Cabinet Company. Brass pendants, Hector Finch. Antique grape-drying baskets hang on the wall.

OPPOSITE: In the wet bar off the pantry, an antique pendant from Edgar-Reeves hangs above an apron-front sink and fixtures, both by Rohl. The painted terra-cotta backsplash tiles are by Walker Zanger. Integrated refrigerator drawers, Sub-Zero.



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IF SOAPSTONE
GETS A SCRATCH OR
A POTENTIAL STAIN,
ALL YOU NEED TO
DO IS OIL IT.”



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his is not some fantasy farmhouse that's more about calico ribbon than baling twine.

BARBARA WESTBROOK: No, it's the heart of a seriously hands-on 380-acre farm—with working cow barns, a chicken coop, beehives, and state-of-the-art equipment. These homeowners love their animals and the land, and they're constantly learning more about sustainable agriculture. They found the property after the husband retired as a big-time CFO in Atlanta. Their architect built this house to replace one that dated to the late 1800s, which was in terrible disrepair.


DOUGLAS BRENNER: What drew them from Atlanta to rural Tennessee?

Instead of playing golf, they wanted to play a responsible part in the environment and enjoy sharing the countryside. The couple's two sons and their wives visit often, along with three little grandkids. The wife serves the best snacks and prepares deliciously simple dinners with a freshness that's right from her garden. On a farm, you don't want anything too fancy. She kept telling me, "We're simple people." The house reflects it.

There's a sophistication to that kind of restraint, both in cuisine and in design.

It's more than avoiding a lot of stuff or pattern, since there is quite a bit of texture here. They were looking for a quietly beautiful place where anyone—whether it's a five-year-old or a guy helping out on the farm—would feel welcome. Although the





Paneling by Stephen Fuller Designs, the home's architect, wraps the study in cozy elegance; it's painted in Pratt & Lambert's Dawn Mist. Bookcases hold well-thumbed volumes on farming, gardening, and architecture. Behind a chest, desk, and tripod from Atlanta's Scott Antique Markets hangs a landscape by Nashville artist Charlotte Terrell. Kitty Williams painted the artwork over the mantel, which Westbrook modeled after Southern period pieces. Armchair, Lee Industries. Rug, Eve and Staron.





A fireplace framed in a pine mantel warms the family room on chilly days. Chairs, Formations. Tin sconces, Period Lighting Fixtures. Chandelier, Bevolo. Bookcase, Dearing Antiques.



new house is classically inspired, like the original one, it was designed around relaxed spaces with plenty of daylight. Everywhere, there are open doors—not just from the family room to the kitchen, but also onto the long back porch, which gets regular use as a living/dining area. Even the ground-floor master bedroom has windows and doors that lead to the back porch—and views of the gorgeous red barn and green rolling hills.

The airiness of light-colored walls and high ceilings seems so Southern to me.

Well, these 12-foot ceilings are a bit challenging in a family house. Furniture had to be scaled up so that it didn't feel dinky but also didn't make anyone feel dwarfed. The wife, in particular, is petite. We made sure she had comfortable places to sit or curl up with a book. It was also important that the kitchen be designed so that everything an accomplished cook may need would be easy to access.

What was on her kitchen must-have list?

Since she can reach only the bottom shelf of upper kitchen cabinets, she asked for everyday dish storage in drawers down below. We designed deep drawers with a sort of pegboard in the

bottom. You can rearrange the pegs to hold plates and bowls of different sizes. It's super-convenient, whatever your height.

These apron-front sinks also have a solid, no-nonsense hominess.

They are made of fireclay, not cast iron. The handmade porcelain finish has a softer, less commercial feel. We put together brass pendants, nickel faucets, pewter-ish cabinet pulls, and iron shelf brackets that look like a local blacksmith hammered them out. We gave the cabinets a hand-applied glaze. The effect is the patina of a home that has grown over generations. More layers come from the mix of antiques in other rooms; some are American, some English, a few French. There's a common thread of sturdiness and warmth in country furniture from all over that fits the casualness of this house.

Could you single out any item in particular?

The Windsor chairs in the breakfast area. They're perfect for families with kids because they're comfortable without cushions. And if a toddler puts a sticky hand on the wooden seat, or stands up on there, it's not an issue. Of course, grown-ups can be just as messy, but Windsor chairs are always forgiving.



The owners plan to restore the property's livestock barn. **OPPOSITE, TOP RIGHT:** Sunshine streams into the master suite. The king-size four-poster is dressed in bedding by Ballard Designs, and the night table is a French antique. **OPPOSITE, BOTTOM RIGHT:** Lloyd Flanders weather-resistant wicker furnishes the back porch. Pendleton plaid pillows join cushions in Sunbrella's Putty fabric, from Kolo Collection. A Hunter fan spins under the blue-painted ceiling that is all but obligatory for a proper Southern porch. FOR MORE DETAILS, SEE RESOURCES