

Embracing the Classics

Calming colors and rustic finishes
complement a fresh take on
farmhouse style.

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Architect Heidi Richardson considers this her favorite room of the home due to "the suggestion of a fireplace which has become an art piece instead. I also like the grey wall color that creates a more intimate mood."



Heidi shares how “the great room maximizes natural light with its generous vaulted ceilings” and that the furnishings were the family’s original pieces, seamlessly tied together with new finds through a calming color palette.

The clients of Mill Valley, California-based architect Heidi Richardson envisioned a complete redesign of their current home, inspired by the architecture and appeal of their treasured visits to the Sonoma, California, wine country. “Their goal was to create a space that allows them to have an indoor/outdoor lifestyle and lots of entertaining,” Heidi says, who in turn proposed a modern farmhouse design that echoes elegance and charm.

Heidi’s new floor plan called for nearly doubling the existing square footage from 2,000 to around 4,000 square feet. During the 14-month design and building timeline, the home was brought down to the studs and reconstructed to accommodate a second story. Heidi opted to reverse the original first floor layout, in an effort to provide a great room at the rear of the home, while adding more formal and entry spaces in the front.

A featured design element that emphasizes the couples’ desire for indoor/outdoor living is the central courtyard. “The existing house had a courtyard; however, with the addition of a second story, the courtyard was enlarged in order to retain the pleasing proportions and appropriate scale,” Heidi says. “The central courtyard is integrated into the overall design, becoming an outdoor room extension of the main living spaces, serving as a safe play



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ABOVE: The over-scale light fixtures were deliberately selected to add touches of whimsy. Rustic wood elements are echoed throughout the open concept design—on floors, barstools and trim applied around the cooktop hood.

RIGHT: Note the stylish mix of light and dark finishes—light marble on the island, dark soapstone on countertops and backsplash, weaved within the common design element of a subdued color palette applied to paint and fabrics.

space and a place to relax and entertain.”

The decorative yet functional details added to the exterior that translate a farmhouse feel include swinging carriage doors that provide access to the courtyard from the driveway, a covered breezeway connecting the garage to the mudroom, and a mix of materials sourced—metal, wood and stone, alongside period-inspired outdoor lighting.

Turning to the interiors, the owners, Heidi and interior designer Jennifer Tidwell worked collectively to achieve a look “that feels calm, comfortable and relaxed, yet refined.”

“The palette of grays and neutrals and natural, medium-toned recycled wood is used throughout to recall the natural wood cottages of Northern California and the gray of the marine layer coming off the Pacific,” Heidi says.

The furnishings and accessories are a mix of the owners’ existing pieces and new additions. The “crisp, fresh farmhouse backdrop—rustic wood floors, bright walls and cool gray tones” Heidi and Jennifer created allow these varied décor elements to seamlessly blend together.



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BELOW: This absolutely soothing space was inspired by the selections of soft-to-the-touch upholstery and linens, and calming tone-on-tone color palette.

RIGHT: Heidi notes the “unexpected textures of weathered wood cabinets and mini chevron floor tiles” add to whimsical design elements accented throughout the home.



Touches of whimsy are reflected in the over-scale light fixtures for the kitchen, a sunny yellow split-horse door that connects the laundry and mudroom, and “a bathroom reveals unexpected textures of weathered wood cabinets and mini chevron floor tiles.”

Heidi reveals that an important component to achieving a modern yet classic farmhouse look to your home is “to have a clear design idea behind design decisions.” She adds, “Select materials that are appropriate for the surrounding environment, but always pay attention to the proportions and scale.”

Heidi’s expert balance of these design principles ultimately translates through the home’s central courtyard. For these happy homeowners seeking to meet the needs of their “contemporary and informal lifestyle,” it not only serves as the focal point of their floor plan, but as Heidi points out, “underscores the residence’s relationship to the outdoors, creating that indoor/outdoor environment that California is known for.”

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Re-inventing Rustic Style

Ideas to give your modern space a vintage, farmhouse feel.

- **TEXTURES.** Many textures have been added to this design that create ambience and an aged glow to the modern space. Stone, wood and metal elements bring a multi-layered style that resonates with older homes and vintage trends.
- **DETAILS.** Utilizing farmhouse fixtures like open shelving, a horse door and weathered wood make this home feel country fresh and authentic.
- **NATURAL ELEMENTS.** Celebrating the spirit of farmhouse living means fostering a connection with the outdoors. Invigorate a patio with new furnishings, and add fresh flowers to your kitchen table or an herb garden to your windowsill.

ABOVE: The exterior exudes fresh farmhouse appeal through the addition of a rustic material mix, a decorative barn-style door for the garage and swinging carriage doors leading to the central courtyard.

TOP RIGHT: The laundry room leads to the covered breezeway with access to the garage. The sunny yellow split door is both functional and decorative, added for an element of whimsy.

BOTTOM RIGHT: The courtyard was the focal point of Heidi's redesign. Note the selection mixed materials, vintage-style farmhouse lighting and view through the covered breezeway to the driveway. A similar color palette is lifted from the interiors and applied to finishes and furnishings.