



above: The Newfield Farmhouse showcases the up-to-date style below: The eating area is filled with natural light thanks to floor-to-ceiling windows

COZY UP

FARMHOUSE STYLE IN STAMFORD

BY DIANE SEMBROT // PHOTOGRAPHY BY TIM LEE FOR BURR SALVATORE ARCHITECTS

Before the start of the pandemic, a Stamford home project was completed. It was done ahead of the switch, when we all would, for months, be spending many more hours each day in our own houses. They became our sanctuary in a world in turmoil. Then, as we emerged from our bunkers, the safety (and luxury) of where we lived became abundantly clear. We took where we live to heart, not for granted. We became grateful for the many comforts it provides.

The time was right to make the space work for us, too. Take this farmhouse project on Newfield Avenue in Stamford. “We decided to build a custom house to sell, but we were fortunate that the young couple who bought it had great taste, and graciously invited us to photograph it after it was fully furnished,” says Ryan Salvatore, co-principal of the architectural firm Burr Salvatore (*burr.salvatore.com*). The firm is headed by Salvatore, who



prior to this firm, worked at Robert A.M. Stern Architects and taught at Yale School of Architecture, as well as working as a general contractor. Mary Burr, co-principal of the firm, comes with experience at Robert A.M. Stern as well as Albert, Righter & Titmann. The full-service architecture and design firm is based in Darien.

This particular house in Stamford is about 4,400 square feet. The first floor has a study, family room, dining room, kitchen, a mud room and a half bath—all the essentials for a busy family. The second floor includes four bedrooms and three full baths.

The project was a complete new construction, which took about eight months to design and about one year to construct. “This site was carved off of an old dairy farm, and the adjacent house is one of the oldest in the area,” says Mary. The land was once pastureland. “All of this made a farmhouse the obvious

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top, left: Oversized windows open up the interior space to natural light and beautiful views of the outside top, right: The entryway includes a cubby to store coats, shoes and other essentials for an active family.



left: The back deck, with minimal and clean lines, provides unobstructed views of the property.



top row: The eating area and a place to sit and relax, both with light floors, clean lines and natural light.
bottom row: The living room and kitchen awash in harmonizing neutral colors

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architectural reference to call upon as we started designing. When we first acquired the site in 2017, the idea of a 'modern farmhouse' was still a fairly novel concept. Since then, we have seen many white farmhouses with black windows popping up, but we like to think we were ahead of the curve.”

As for the design process, she adds, “We are a husband-and-wife team, and our design

process in the early phases is always collaborative. Typically, we will each sketch a scheme, and then switch, so neither one of us gets too invested, or feels too much ownership over a design.”

As with any project of this size, challenges are inevitable. When asked about the biggest one, Ryan says, “Reining ourselves in.” Taking a moment to think about it, he adds, “Designers

often do not make good spec-house builders. We wanted to build something lasting for our portfolio and our practice, and of which we could be proud. There was a lot of temptation to experiment and take risks, and of course the purists in us wanted to construct everything the right way—that is, the expensive way—which is not always the best recipe for profitability. Ultimately, we looked at this as an

experiment in how much one can or cannot monetize thoughtful design.”

With large windows and walkouts to a porch and a deck, the house is filled with natural light. The airy feel is enhanced with white walls and ceilings and natural wood floors. The kitchen brings in touches of seaglass blue in the backsplash, while a bedroom has a soothing mossy gray walls. The home has a soothing cohesiveness, from the neutral shades of white, gray and brown as well as unfussy lines and treatments, such as unadorned windows.

The whole look is established at the front step, literally. The front porch includes a post made of stone. “The stone post that supports the steel beam of the front porch is one of our favorite moments,” says Mary. “This is a reclaimed piece of stone that we found at Chester Granite in Massachusetts. It gives the house a totally unique, unexpected moment that feels both modern, yet organic and contextual.”

While the farmhouse look is popular now, even in a city, the project was a rarity at the beginning. Asked about the inspiration, Ryan explains, “The site is carved off of an old dairy farm, which inspired our decision to design within the ‘farmhouse’ vernacular.” The style endures through the years.

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above: The bathroom tilework steals the show. below, left: A large tub provides a chance to relax; the built-in shelves keep essentials organized and out of the way. below, right: Neutrals continue in the bedroom with plenty of windows for sunny days and a fireplace for chilly evenings.

