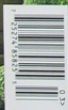


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DOWN *on the farm*

Michael Malone designs a rural retreat rich in history and period architecture—complete with a coordinating horse barn.

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When Gary and Sandra Fernandes set out to build a home on family farmland, they had authenticity in mind, as in rustic materials and classic farmhouse architectural styles. The endeavor would require a hands-on architect who would assume an active role in determining locations for the home and accompanying outbuildings. Since they already lived in a house designed by Michael Malone, and they knew and loved his work, they figured there was no better architect to help fulfill their dreams for Lyday Farms.

Malone was thrilled. "They [the couple] are smart and talented and capable, and she's artistic, so that makes them dream clients in a lot of ways. It was a really interesting project for us. It's a significant house in an area that doesn't have a lot of trophy ranches. They wanted a rural house that would be authentic to Northeast Texas, but not some cutesy barn/farm thing. It's a wood-and-metal house that is architecturally interesting, compared with other rural buildings, but doesn't look inappropriate in its environment."

Gary concurs. "We had some fairly fixed concepts of what we wanted in terms of a house that looked like it belonged on the land and was rooted in the same concepts that old East Texas farmhouses were. You see so often upscale properties built in the country you could have plucked right out of North Dallas. This looks like a farmhouse; it doesn't look like it would belong in a city. And it has a lot of legacy, and fits well with the trees.



Sandra is responsible for the eclectic feel of the interiors. A life rustic, a life modern, Sandra likes that the home's feel can go either way.

opening spread The wraparound screen porch ties the two sections of the main house together. The exterior and the roof are done in Clad metal.

"We built on a site maybe 30 yards from the home my wife grew up in, so there's that tie to the past." Early in the process, he and Malone set out on a tour of the surrounding area to observe other rural buildings, making note of elements they could use as inspiration for their own design.

For the main dwelling, which is actually two structures, two of the homeowners' must-have features were the double-sloped roof and the dogtrot. The roof style is typical of early 1900s barn and farm buildings, with a single gable and lower sloped pitches. "I said if we're going to do that roof shape, let's do it authentically," says Malone. The shape originates with a center section of the building, and from there, other pieces were added on. "Back then, when they added on they would have added shed additions so in the bathrooms, for example, the roofing changes. They're treated as additions to the main house. That's one of the things I was really glad they let me do."

The dogtrot is a roofed passage, or breezeway, that runs between two parts of a structure, with rooms opening onto it. Originally designed to keep old farmhouses cool, it acts as a large, open hallway with doors at either end. The Ferrandises have even hosted dinner parties out in their dogtrot, and it's this thoroughfare that divides the two portions of the main house. One contains the living room, dining room, and kitchen, along with two guest rooms, and the flip side houses the master suite, with its own sitting room and screen porch. The suite serves as a getaway of sorts, and it's here the pair finds seclusion from guests, and even have a private breakfast bar set up for quiet coffee moments. The complex also contains space for Gary's business, Sandra's art studio, and wine storage.

With three children and eight grandchildren, it was important that the layout be accommodating. "We built on the idea of a compound; not a single structure but multiple structures that fit together," says Gary. "The compound idea came out of our idea of being able to entertain family and friends, but have privacy. What ties



the main house together is the covered, wraparound screen porch. That was an important concept—to be able to have privacy if you have friends, family, with everyone having their own space.”

The dwelling owes much of its charm to the meticulously chosen raw materials. The exterior and roof are done in clad metal that blends seamlessly with river rock wainscoting. The walls, floors, and ceilings have tongue-and-groove wood siding to add a horizontal linear texture to the interior walls, an effect appropriate to the home’s refined aesthetic. “We did all that metal because I thought it needed to be an easy-care deal,” says Sandra. “The only thing we have to touch up is a little bit of wood trim.”

Gary credits his wife with the interior design, and the rooms evoke a worldly, welcoming feel worthy of their abode’s pastoral setting. “My wife has very eclectic taste,” Gary adds. “It’s not ranch, it’s not Ralph Lauren, it’s a mix of furniture and fabrics from around the world, a mix of design styles that fit very well together.”

“My furniture is just stuff,” Sandra says of the chic, cozy, collected look. “A lot of it is from older places. I like Asian fabrics, and have a lot of rugs we collect. I’m very tactile. Some of my favorite things in the bedroom are dresses worn by African women that I bought in Africa. I just like having those things around me. It works for all the grandchildren and makes us happy. With the wood, walls, and ceiling it can either be rustic or if I wanted to, I could go modern.”

Tying the house in with the topography was imperative, so a muted grey

above A mushhove feature, the dog trot—or *Emicoryne*—was originally designed to keep old farmhouses cool.

middle Arkansas River rock lines the lap pool, coordinating it with the other structures.

below The walls, floors, and ceilings have tongue-and-groove wood siding to add a horizontal linear texture to the interior walls as displayed in the dining room.

facing page The main house consists of two portions, one contains the living room, dining room, kitchen, and two guest rooms.



seemed natural for the home’s exterior. Malone likens the look to that of English countryside houses, all grey stones and lush green, plus it melds with the Arkansas river rock fireplace, the paving on the outside walk, and the large retaining wall that anchors the house to the hillside. Coordinating river rock lines the lap pool, and the couple included a complete outdoor kitchen in their blueprint. The home was built around a courtyard, and a pond fed by a nearby spring serves as the grandkids’ fishing hole. A Dallas firm specializing in farm properties orchestrated the landscape design using only native plants, and a few natural elements, like red oak trees, were transplanted from other spots on the property.

Prior to building the main house, Malone designed the property’s barn, home to a group of the Egyptian Arabian horses the Fernandes breed and train. It’s in the same architectural style as the house. “In fact, we built the barn before we built the house,” says Gary. “We refer to that as our ‘show barn.’”

Wildlife abounds at the homestead, plus there’s the couple’s own menagerie of farm animals, including dogs, cats, and donkeys, and they do an annual Christmas bird count—this year’s tally was 41.

“I must say, every time you design a house—and this is our third time around doing ground-up design—you look back and say you’d have done this or that differently, but on the whole, the house has been very special to us,” Gary notes. “We’ve really enjoyed the house; it’s a functional house for the way we live.”

It was originally the couple’s second home, but depending on the season, they spend more than two-thirds of their time at the farmhouse, returning to their Dallas pied-à-terre when they crave a taste of urban life. “We thought it would be back and forth every week, but it’s become more than a getaway,” says Gary.

“Michael is just wonderful, a genius about design, and had to put up with us,” says Sandra. “We wanted it to lay on the land, look like it belonged there. It fits.”