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FROM THE
EDITORS OF **CountryHome.**





reviving tradition

Inspired by centuries-old timber frame constructions, a skilled craftsman melds old-world architecture with modern amenities for a family of four.

Urula and Enrico Ceola's home sits on 9 acres of rolling meadows—altered only by pathways and manicured spaces etched out of the tall grass where their young children and puppy play. Weathered cedar siding echoes the architectural vernacular of the Berkshires and alludes to the abundant exposed wood in the interior.



The charcoal-gray color scheme in the living area was borne out of the practicality of having two young children. Couches and chairs are covered in linen for durability, and a heavy, weathered coffee table is forgiving to nicks and scratches. Animal print weaves the home's contemporary and natural elements together while providing pattern for visual interest. Clerestory windows above the main-floor framework draw the eye upward to the ceiling's arresting architecture.



When Ursula and Enore Ceola want to have a movie night with their two children, they hang a sheet from the rafters of their timber frame home. Using a projector—there isn't a single television in the house—they begin the film, dialogue echoing off high ceilings sheathed in Eastern white pine. Even more impressive than the acoustics is how the architecture came to be—a remarkable combination of traditional artisanship and modern sensibility.

Having moved from New York City to rural Berkshire County in Massachusetts, Ursula and Enore originally wanted a modern home that felt as loftlike and industrial as the Brooklyn apartments they were accustomed to. But when a friend introduced Ursula to builder Dave Lanoue, the Ceolas' vision of their home in the countryside began to morph. "The essence of light is what attracted us to a modern building in the first place," Ursula says. "We liked the idea of having large, open spaces, and working with Dave, we found we could have that, but in a way that blends into our rural environment."

Lanoue, the couple discovered, already had nearly completed the framework of a home, which he could transport to their property. Based off of 19th-century swing-beam hay barns, the structure is built without modern fixtures like nails or brackets, instead using only wooden mortise-and-tenon joints to hold beams together. "The wide-open spaces in these early timber frame forms lend a distinctly modern touch to the architecture," Lanoue says. "And they tolerate up-to-date translations of cabinetry, furnishings, kitchens, and baths very well."

Having a kitchen that functions with ease was of utmost importance to both Ursula and Enore, given that they are both avid cooks and enjoy hosting meals for family and friends. Contemporary stainless-steel fixtures in the kitchen offset abundant wood for a clean, streamlined look—made possible by Ursula's cunning storage. "I took inventory of every piece of cookware and tableware we owned, and had cabinets custom-made to fit," she says. "I wanted to make sure we had room for everything we needed."

For resources, see page 96.



Urula doesn't like clutter and usually doesn't collect items. Her only weakness? Pottery by local artisans. She had the dining room's built-in shelves designed to feature each piece like a framed work of art. A bench custom-made by her friend Jean-François Bizalton looks like part of the dining table set. The wall of pottery is offset by a mixed media drawing by local artist Sarah Horne.



modern
living in
old-world
homes

Homeowner Ursula Coola and builder Dave Lanoue suggest how to preserve the integrity of traditionally designed structures while updating them to fit modern-day needs.

LEAVE ARCHITECTURE UNADORNED Keep window casings untreated and beams looking unfinished. "You can see the framework, so there is an honesty of construction not evident in most other types of homes," Lanoue says. Juxtaposing exposed wood with expanses of drywall gives the architecture a blank canvas from which to pop.


KEEP THE MAIN LIVING AREA SINGLE-STORY While timber frame structures are generally single-story, Ursula needed to build in space for an office and bedrooms. She opted to add a small second-story loft to the perimeter of the main living area, which is accessible via a compact spiral staircase. "We wanted to leave the interior as wide and tall as possible," Ursula says. "So we chose to cover the dining space and use that loft area as an office."

INCORPORATE HISTORICAL ARCHITECTURE FOR AUTHENTICITY A two-story ladder by the entryway speaks to the original use of the 19th-century swing-beam hay barns that Lanoue based his design on. The ladder was originally used by workers to fork hay, and although the Coolas have never used the ladder for that purpose, it's a great talking point for guests, and adds authenticity and character to the home.



above: Both Enore and Ursula love to cook—Enore works in the wine industry, and he and Ursula often have guests over on weekends for large meals. “This house is really all about sharing it,” Ursula says. “For some, it’s a burden, but for us, it’s just fun.” Ursula designed the kitchen herself, complete with custom cabinetry and open shelving. below left: Each spring, tulips cover portions of the rolling meadows that surround the home. below right: The upstairs loft houses Ursula’s office, where she designs her own tablecloths, napkins, and fabrics; she hopes to turn the hobby into a business. opposite: A niche tucked next to the spiral staircase showcases a vintage African mask and a Japanese wicker basket, both collected during two of the couple’s many trips abroad.





"We wanted simple furnishings that wouldn't fight what's above—the architecture demands your attention."

—homeowner
Ursula Coala