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HOME TOURS

# A Massachusetts Farmhouse So Quaint You'll Want to Move to the Countryside

*\*Slowly breathes in the fresh air.\**

BY **LYDIA GEISEL**

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When **Jess Cooney**'s clients first discovered their dream farmhouse in Monterey, Massachusetts, they were instantly awed by the home's 1700s charm and beautiful wide-plank floors. Little did they know that all that old-world character would soon be lost to an unforeseen electrical fire.

"The house is located in a wooded area, so it burned for a long time because nobody knew that it was happening," shares the designer. While Cooney and her team were tasked with starting the build from scratch, the do-over proved to be a blessing in disguise. "We were able to do things correctly—like sit the house in a better location and dig out a new foundation for a nice basement."



With the new footprint finally in place, Cooney faced a new challenge: rewriting history.

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“I think the main thing was building them a new home that felt timeless. We really wanted people to pull up to the house and not know what year it had been built,” the designer tells Domino.

Cooney and her team worked to infuse some of that original character back into the space, bringing in reclaimed wood floors, locally sourced stone, and old barn ceiling beams. Looking at the home now, you’d almost never know that it was a new build. Ahead, Cooney shares what it’s really like to start from scratch and re-create that quintessential farmhouse character.



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## The kitchen is stunning. What were some of your must-have moments for this space?

We knew that we wanted a baking pantry. The client's daughter really loves to bake. We also wanted that cozy banquette off the kitchen, so we centered the space with the pantry and the banquette in the back and then had it branch out from there into the open living room with the gas fireplace. We also wanted to use a little more of the reclaimed materials on the island and bring back the wood there.



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### *A kid-approved snack station*

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I design a lot for families with younger children, so I always try to have a certain zone that's kid-friendly. We'll often make a snack zone in the pantry—it might have a set of refrigerated drawers, a microwave, or some lower drawers for snacks that kids can reach. That way, they can be self-sufficient and not right in the cooking zone where you're chopping, prepping, or using the cooktop.

### *A flexible dining area*

We also do a lot of second homes for people. The couple that purchased the home might be there a lot by themselves, but they also might have huge holiday meals, so we try to create a space that feels cozy when there's two of you and then can expand out when there's 20 or 30. The breakfast nook [in this kitchen] is really nice for when they're just there by themselves eating, but it can extend out into the bigger dining area when they have family come.

### *Plenty of wash space*

Here, we ended up doing three kitchen sinks: a prep sink in the island, the main sink, and then a sink inside the pantry for baking.



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## **Bringing back that original character must have been a huge undertaking. How challenging was it to find and source the right materials to channel that timeless feel?**

It's all about having good vendors that you rely on in the area. The three biggest elements that we wanted were the reclaimed floors, the beams, and the plaster walls. The flooring [that we used] doesn't really exist anymore, so we used a mix of different sizes and widths. We used Danby marble counters from Vermont and natural stones for the hand-built fireplace to make it look like an older home original to the area. With the fabrics and some of the light fixtures, you can be a bit trendier, but it's important to keep the base of the house really quiet and soft and timeless.

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We kept the tile and countertops pretty quiet so we wanted to add a little touch to the walls or the window treatments that could be easily changed out. The client's daughter is 11 so we went with that watercolor print. In five years, she can switch that out and paint it or add a completely different wallpaper and change the whole feel. We could be a bit bolder because it's more temporary. We did the same in the master bathroom with a quiet palette and a graphic punch with the shades.

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## If you had to pick a favorite room or moment, what would it be?

One of the things I love the most is the stone fireplace in the living room. It's really the soul of the house. We had a local mason do the whole thing by hand, and it's almost like a piece of artwork. The original house had an old stone



Bring that back and have to feel even more seasonal.

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