



the simple life

How one New Jersey couple created a well-crafted home from a big ole barn — family style **BY KATHLEEN FIFIELD**

Photographs by **Karen Pearson** | Styling by **Mariellen Melker**

Admiring the kitchen counter her husband Colin recently installed, Samantha Lindberg says: “It’s a tremendous feeling to look at it and know my husband made it.” It’s a sentiment repeated several times during a tour of the rustic, well-designed home, one that suits the creative, outdoorsy couple as easily as the hammock slung up in their living room. The unique living space grew out of a familiar frustration: trying to find a decent house in their price range. It was Colin’s parents who first floated the idea of renovating the old barn on the family’s Cranbury, New Jersey, property. “What about the barn?” recalls Samantha, quickly became, “Yeah, what *about* the barn!” The result is a brilliant repurposing that reflects not only the couple’s independent spirit but also how much one family’s teamwork can accomplish.

In their converted barn, homeowners Samantha and Colin Lindberg, **LEFT,** peek out of the upstairs space that they plan to turn into a guest room. The sliding panels, which Colin built, echo the barn’s exterior sliding doors and are visible from the couple’s loft bedroom on the opposite side of the second level. The antique quilt was a wedding gift; made locally, it bears the same name as the family who owned the circa-1780 house and the property on which the barn sits.



Light streams through opposing sets of glass doors to make the living room, **BELOW**, a sunny spot. After moving in with just their bed and Colin's hammock ("his favorite spot," Samantha jokes), the couple is slowly furnishing their first home in a style they call "recycled." As Samantha says, "The barn is something we found an adaptive reuse for, and we want to fill it with things that we've breathed new life into. Basically, we find a lot of different things and try to make them fit." Case in point: the wine barrel-cum-end table, which they salvaged from behind a liquor store. Interior color choices extend the inside-out feel of the barn: Leftover stained-green exterior siding was used as accents throughout the space, while most of the interior siding was stained a neutral hue. "It's nice to see the wood grain," says Colin. Finally, the brick-red painted concrete floor is similar to the barn's exterior trim.



At the start of the renovation

helmed by architecture firm Rasmussen/Su and The New Jersey Barn Company, the barn was stripped to its 200-year-old white-oak frame. (The couple was married in front of the spectral outline in 2006.) The dramatically scaled glass entrance with sliding exterior doors, **ABOVE**, echoes what would have been the original wagon opening. **LEFT**: A steel bridge, visible from the open living room below, links the two upstairs rooms and, like the exposed pipes below, lends the barn a touch of industrial edge. "The contrast of steel against the old timbers," says architect Kevin Rasmussen, "was definitely a strategy we try to employ—that is, not trying to make new stuff look old."





The open kitchen features cabinets built by the lead carpenter on the barn renovation, some made of the salvageable original siding. A 900-pound concrete counter, *OPPOSITE TOP*, was molded, poured, mixed, sanded, polished and installed by Colin, working with his father and “some really strong friends.” The dining room table is from what Samantha jokes is her favorite furniture “store”: her mother-in-law’s garage. Her father-in-law salvaged the chairs—once joined to school desks, he removed the tops, stripped their paint, and refinished them. A simple, industrial-style IKEA pendant that’s similar to several of the barn’s exterior lights is an unfussy classic choice set against the woody backdrop.



The fire nook, *BELOW*, separates the living room and kitchen, and showcases the home’s main source of heat: the wood stove that turned Colin into a bit of a firewood junkie. “If he sees a downed tree on someone’s property, he’ll stop and ask if he can take it,” his wife reports. Radiant heat below the concrete floor is turned on sparingly in cold weather; structural insulated panels (SIPs) provide highly efficient insulation.





In the master bath, ABOVE, is a basin thrown by one of the family's favorite potters, John Shedd of Rocky Hill, New Jersey. Colin selected the lighting fixtures (exterior lights from The Home Depot) and laid all of the room's tile himself, his first such project ever. He became so involved with the renovation of the barn—from staining its siding to building the exterior sliding doors—that his contractor, Pinneo Construction, offered him a job.

The couple's bedroom, OPPOSITE, occupies what was once the barn's hayloft, with windows facing the neighboring tree farm. "We wake up to the sound of sprinklers," says Samantha. To the left of the bed are two bump-out closets and a cozy window seat; in front, a sitting area, separated from the sleeping space with flanking walls. The idea of the two-part bedroom area, says Rasmussen, was "to provide some privacy and separation while taking advantage of the openness of the barn." Built-in window seats, LEFT, and benches provide additional streamlined storage.

