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Contemporary Classic

A new Vermont home takes its inspiration from a centuries-old farmhouse design.

After falling in love with and buying what the husband calls “easily one of the most beautiful lots in Vermont,” this New York City-based couple explored every inch of its twenty acres of rolling meadow. They marveled at the Rochester property’s unobstructed views of the Green Mountains and—in the distance—the upper ski runs on Killington Peak. “We walked the land, hiked it, even picnicked all over it, trying to find the best location to site the second home we envisioned building,” says the husband.

Then they discovered photos of a simple but elegant farmhouse on the website of the Burlington, Vermont-based architectural firm TruexCullins, and called architect Lee Grutchfield to talk about designing something similar for them. “After meeting with them, it was clear we needed to expand the design rendering they first saw,” says Grutchfield. “We used that as a starting point and added more rooms and made other changes to help it respond to the site.” Builder Chris Nichols also walked the property and assisted with the home’s final siting.

Once the clients saw Grutchfield’s proposals, they decided, as the husband explains, “To give Lee a free hand. We didn’t want to hamstring him and wanted to maximize his potential.”

The result is a 3,500-square-foot, three-bedroom, modern take on the New England farmhouse vernacular. “It honors that iconic lineage with its clean lines and human-scaled forms and spaces,” Grutchfield explains. “But it also reflects contemporary

Set on a bucolic twenty-acre lot nestled into the Green Mountains, the three-bedroom contemporary home was inspired by traditional New England farmhouse design, but features a modern touch: walls of windows that invite the outside in and take full advantage of distant views.

| TEXT BY ROBERT KIENER | PHOTOGRAPHY BY JIM WESTPHALEN |

Good Bones



tastes in the way it looks out onto the landscape and blurs the boundaries between the interior and the exterior.”

Bringing the outside in was one of the clients’ early wishes, and Grutchfield accomplished that in various ways. He chose an array of floor-to-ceiling double-pane windows with horizontal muntins that, as he says, “march across the front of the house” and look onto the distant vistas to the south. He also built in several different views to the outside in his floor plan, explaining that, “A big piece of this design is the way you look out from inside the house.”

An open porch design provides unobstructed visual access to the outside. “It was a great idea,” says the owner. “Because when you open the windows in the summer the entire house feels like a screened-in porch.”

A pergola, or brise-soleil, off the master bedroom at the front of the house also provides a sun break without obscuring the views.

To further help bring the outside in, Grutchfield made liberal use of natural materials throughout the interior, including Douglas fir joists, Vermont black slate on the mudroom floor, Adirondack buff stone and Pennsylvania bluestone for the fireplace, and spruce wall paneling. He exposed the second-story’s floor joists as well as some structural beams,

The light-filled home is chockablock with windows, from smaller, traditionally inspired square models (above) to the great room’s modern floor-to-ceiling windows (above, right). **RIGHT:** The open-plan kitchen is set off from the rest of the first floor by bold colors on the cabinets and island, as well as a pair of bright yellow dining chairs.



Good Bones

To preserve the magnificent views from the master bedroom, the owners chose simple roll-up window blinds. **FACING PAGE, LEFT TO RIGHT:** In the bathroom, barn sash windows afford privacy while letting in lots of light. An open porch design ensures that distant mountain vistas are not obstructed from inside the home.



as he explains, “To give a nod to the classic post and beam construction of older farmhouses. Also people invariably respond to being able to see the bones of the house. They don’t always need to be hidden.”

The wife, who has a background in interior design, chose a muted color palette that reflects the home’s clean, fresh, bright feel. Most walls are

painted white, while the kitchen cupboards and island are blue-gray. “We didn’t want the interior to detract from or overwhelm the architecture of the house,” says the husband. “The whole idea was to balance the interior design with the home’s distinct architecture.”

Grutchfield’s attention to detail is especially evi-



dent on the home's exterior. He used horizontal clapboard siding on the areas that have lower pitched roofs, and gave the taller spaces vertical board-and-batten siding. "They work together to make the house more interesting," he says. A standing seam roof made of Galvalume, galvanized zinc and aluminum, is in the Vermont vernacular, but also pushes

the design a bit to the contemporary side.

The owners report that every time they visit their second home they marvel at its blend of classic and modern. "It seems to fit right into both the landscape and the neighborhood," says the husband. "We got the exact house we wanted. We feel right at home." ■■■

RESOURCES : For more information about this home, see page 210.