





ready *for the* weekend

A CARAVAN OF CITY FOLK DESCENDS ON THIS CHARMING FARMHOUSE ALMOST EVERY FRIDAY EVENING, ALL EAGER FOR SOME SLOWDOWN TIME SURROUNDED BY FAMILY. NO WORRIES—THE HOUSE IS DESIGNED TO ACCOMMODATE.

OPPOSITE A game table (and a matching one nearby) soaks in the sunshine against one wall—this is a hot spot during weekend visits to the Texas home. Drop leaves can expand both tables to seat six each—that way, several adults can gather 'round to play cards or board games, and come dinnertime, kids can crowd around to eat. **ABOVE** Built in 1895 in a small depression in the hollow, the farmhouse sits a little lower than everything around it—just enough to give every room an expansive view of the surrounding crape myrtle trees, split rail fence, and big Texas sky.

WRITTEN BY SARAH HALVERSON PHOTOGRAPHED BY JULIE SOEFER PRODUCED BY JESSICA BRINKERT HOLTAM



Monday through Friday, this 1895 farmhouse takes it nice and easy,

MOSTLY DOZING ON 140 SPRAWLING ACRES IN THE TEXAS COUNTRYSIDE. IT HAS SOME COMPANY—CARETAKERS WHO OVERSEE the property, a few head of cattle, throngs of whitetail deer—but it leads a quiet existence during the workweek.

It might be saving its strength: Come Friday night, one car after another coasts along the curved driveway, barely braking before the passengers pile out of the vehicles, understandably happy for their stay at a weekend home designed for comfort and relaxation. The crowd includes the property owners, their grown children, an ever-increasing number of grandkids, and any friends who want to tag along—most making the 90-minute trek from Houston nearly every week. It's all in the name of hightailing it out of the city to soak up the good life found in the country: the property's rolling plains, early-morning coffee on the porch, dunks in the pool, and quality time with people they love.

OPPOSITE Because family gatherings were the whole point of purchasing the place, it was essential to outfit the living room with sofas guests can sink into, ottomans for putting up feet, rugs that hide dirt and drips from the outdoors, and decor that can withstand grandkids scampering through at any moment. **THIS PHOTO** Interior designers Aileen Warren and Kiley Jackson refreshed the paneling with soft putty-color paint and the ceilings and trim with warm white, then they hung antique crates and tractor seats on the wall as rugged decorations. Textured upholstery on the sofas not only helps hide spills and marks, but it is also extremely soft; armchairs got a shot of casual color in a thick cotton fabric with a subtle pattern.





The 3,800-square-foot farmhouse is well-prepared for all these guests. That's because interior designers Kiley Jackson and Aileen Warren of Jackson Warren Interiors in Houston were involved in the home's refreshment from the get-go, Jackson even doing a walk-through with the homeowners before they bought the place. The house was older, yes, but it was in fine shape, having been sturdily built more than a century before and carefully updated over the decades. Wood paneling covered several walls and ceilings, longleaf pine floors beamed underfoot, and long ago the kitchen and bathrooms had undergone tasteful renovations. Most rooms needed just fresh paint, a slew of sofas and chairs to seat a crowd, and a smattering of tables to host meals as well as rousing rounds of cards and Bunco.

To create the cozy country retreat, Jackson and Warren artfully mingled furniture and accessories from three main sources: items that came with the

ABOVE The kitchen is plenty spacious for a crowd, anchored by a butcher-block-topped island that includes seating on two sides. **OPPOSITE, BOTTOM LEFT** Existing cabinets were painted in Benjamin Moore Kendall Charcoal, a chameleon color that tends toward purple, blue, or even green depending on the light. "It's really adaptable," Jackson says. "And the 1950s counters and backsplash don't look dated at all—this house is the perfect setting for them."



LEFT The kitchen needed mercifully little work, having been overhauled in the 1950s with classic tile counters, solid wood cabinets, and a painted tin backsplash. It was updated more recently with a deep apron-front sink, industrial pendant lighting, and new appliances. **BELOW** In the breakfast room, a built-in hutch painted the same gray as the kitchen cabinetry to tie the adjacent rooms together, offers open shelves for vintage white stoneware. A marble and iron pedestal table is surrounded by barrel-back wooden chairs that came from a schoolhouse, dating to 1886, that's also on the property. "Who knows how old those are?" Jackson says. "They could be multiple generations old."





property, new pieces from a favorite upholstery shop in Houston, and fortuitous finds from Round Top, an antiquing hub just down the road (some of the vintage items were literally found on the side of that road). In fact, the homeowners often texted the designers with photos before pulling the trigger on a purchase. “The way we like to work is we get in the space, take its dimensions, draw in the ideal sizes of furniture, and give that information to the clients in case they want to source certain things themselves,” Jackson says. “It makes the process easier, and we love that collaboration.” Nearly every room includes one or two Round Top treasures.

This meaningful mix gives the farmhouse a strong sense of its own history—plus a modern touch that caters to the discerning city dweller. The city folk, after all, are the home’s most frequent and cherished company. □

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LEFT For holidays and family celebrations, the formal dining room steps into service. This space already had beautiful bones, including dark-stained beaded board on the ceiling and original shiplap on the walls. Jackson and Warren simply invited in a spacious table with scrolled iron legs (which let light from the windows pass through), Windsor chairs (no cushions needed), and vintage art. **BELOW LEFT** A weathered-to-perfection bedroom dresser makes a handy place to keep dining linens and flatware organized and within arm's length. **BELOW** The long, well-worn bench and the metal hooks mounted above it came with the house. They both are rich in character and charm, but they're also practical for guests to use for putting on boots or hanging hats.



The family room is designed for lounging and gathering. It's extra cozy because of the fireplace and extra boisterous because of the pool table (not shown). Again, for plenty of seating, the interior designers rounded up a pair of spindle armchairs (covered in lively blue fabric), two chic mismatched ottomans (one upholstered in orange mohair and the other a kilim rug for durability), and a sprawling sofa that stretches along one wall.





**“The clients wanted
furniture to be
comfortable upholstery,
sofas you could sink
into, overstuffed
lounge chairs—really
comfortable and casual.”**

—INTERIOR DESIGNER AILEEN WARREN

“This house is just 90 minutes outside of Houston, but it feels remote. You’re getting peace and quiet and the beautiful landscape, and it’s an easy drive from the city.”

—AILEEN WARREN





LEFT The spacious farmhouse has five bedrooms, including this second-floor beauty clad in original shiplap, to quarter the troops when they're in town. Ceilings on the second floor don't quite clear 7½ feet, so white was chosen for walls and bedding to make the rooms seem more spacious. **RIGHT** The homeowners insisted on king-size beds in every room, "so they're comfortable for kids and spouses and grandchildren," Jackson says, "which means there's room for a small nightstand on the side and not much else. But you really don't spend a lot of time in your bedroom here." Roman shades at the window can be adjusted to filter early-morning sun without interfering with the verdant view outside. **BELOW** As in other bedrooms, a lowboy dresser subs as a nightstand; it's plenty long for a lamp and books, plus there's drawer after drawer for clothing and gear, enough so the homeowners can leave some of their things at the house. Two new armchairs—upholstered in a whimsical fabric woven with animals and leaves—provide a quiet spot to unwind after a full day.

