

Putting the fun in FARMHOUSE

This North Dakota farmhouse is a perfect balance of colors and neutrals, sophistication and ease, family and fun.

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PHOTOGRAPHY BY COREY GAFFER

When the sky is the limit, how do you narrow down your options? This was the challenge designer Darsi Floersch of Martha O'Hara Interiors faced when she helped decorate a custom farmhouse for a family in North Dakota. With limitless options, the process of winnowing down the possibilities became the key to a successful, cohesive design.

The exterior of the home features the classic elements central to farmhouse style, including gables, dormer windows and shiplap siding.



THE ART OF BLENDING

This was a new build, and as such, Darsi and the homeowners had to make choices about everything, from the architecture and details to the size of the rooms and décor. “Having free reign was a challenge,” Darsi said. “[The homeowner] is earthy, but she wanted fun colors too.” Darsi had to make both bright colors and subdued neutrals work within the same space.

To do this, she balanced neutrals with color throughout the house. In the kitchen, for example, a bold navy blue covers the island and peaks out from above through a wallpaper panel on the ceiling. Yet the hearth room, directly off the kitchen, is a masculine mix of wood, stone and leather. “You have to make sure everything balances,” Darsi says. “That’s why we interior designers do what we do.” For the most part, Darsi kept bright color out of the dining room and master bathroom, which helped tip the house back to neutral. “We had spaces that were without color, that were still interesting but more neutral,” she says.

Darsi also worked with architect Ben Nelson to make sure there were consistent elements that ran throughout the house. All the flooring is reclaimed and speaks to that lasting farmhouse feel. The windows, too, needed consistency. Though they painted or stained window casings to work with individual rooms, the pane farmhouse-style windows contribute to the overall country vibe throughout the 4,500 square-foot structure.

ABOVE: The hearth room stands just off the kitchen, and is a drastic change from the other downstairs rooms, with their bright hues. “We wanted it to be a little separate,” Darsi says. “It’s a place you could go and have a shot of whisky or hang out after dinner.” To bring in a hint of the color in the rest of the house, Darsi added a red and white striped sofa.

OPPOSITE: The dining room stays neutral with black and white elements. The chairs are custom, featuring traditional farmhouse backs with a twist. “We couldn’t find exactly what we wanted, so we commissioned them,” Darsi says.



Mix and match farmhouse aesthetics to create diversity within your house. Pair colonial dining chairs with a shabby table, or add industrial lighting to your modern kitchen.

“They wanted old-school country style.”

The kitchen has a neutral background with a pop of navy blue on the island and ceiling details. A black range breaks up the white cabinets, and even the refrigerator fits into the modern farmhouse look with its white front. **OPPOSITE:** Who thinks to decorate their pantry? Darsi did. She painted the cupboards and shelves Benjamin Moore Sunshine, and commissioned the gingerbread details as an added custom touch.



DIY FAUX TILE CEILING

Here's an easy way to create a faux tin ceiling.

WHAT YOU'LL NEED:

- Large window casing, picture frame or pieces of trim
- Wallpaper of your choice
- Pencil
- Micro pinner or other finishing nail gun
- Paint (optional)

WHAT YOU'LL DO:

1. Mark the area on the ceiling where you want the detail.
2. Sand, paint and construct the frame of out of trim, if necessary.
3. Place your wallpaper, face down, on a flat surface. Lay the window casing or frame over the wallpaper and trace the inside of the frame onto the wallpaper with a pencil to determine how much you need.
4. Cut out the wallpaper, leaving an additional ¼-½ inch around the outside to make sure the casing will cover the wallpaper completely.
5. Attach the wallpaper to the ceiling in the correct position.
6. Use the micro pinner or another finishing nail gun to attach the frame over the wallpaper.



Don't forget about the floor! Add depth and interest to a room with details such as rugs, tile patterns or reclaimed boards.



CLOCKWISE FROM TOP LEFT: While many laundry rooms are the most neglected in the home, Darsi made the space so charming that the chore will be desirable. She used laminate tile “to make it more old school,” and hinted at the farmhouse inspiration through details such as chickens on the fabric in the café windows. • The master bathroom is a study in old-school farmhouse style. “We replicated the stall after old school buildings,” Darsi says. To keep the bathroom from looking too feminine, they skipped a chandelier over the freestanding tub, opting instead for several pendant lights and reclaimed wood on the ceiling. • Sometimes, adding a custom piece makes all the difference. The lockers are a commission that Darsi designed herself, with faucet handles at the back of each locker to act as hooks. The steel door on the left is covered in chalk paint so the kids can play in the room as well.

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CREATING A FAMILY-FRIENDLY SPACE

Another important feature was to make the home friendly for the family's three kids—an element that is central to farmhouse style. "They're all about letting the kids be kids," Darsi says. "They're really inviting; they have family over a lot." To accommodate all the little pairs of feet, Darsi added subtle details that make surfaces easy to clean and provide entertainment in out-of-the-way places.

In the kitchen, Darsi added custom bar chairs for the island. But instead of covering them with a rich fabric that would stain easily, she used faux leather. "[The homeowner] kept saying, 'What about when so-and-so spills her pudding?'" she says. This solution was both simple and subtle, and makes messes easy to wipe away.

The playroom was another area where Darsi helped the kids be themselves. On top of the reclaimed flooring she used throughout the house, Darsi added a coat of red paint. "It was a challenge to get the exact right shade," she says. "It was oak flooring, but we wanted it to look better as it was used more." The paint protects the wood and allows the kids to spill juice or splatter water colors with minimal damage.

"It's a sophisticated farmhouse, but it also has easy living," Darsi says. From the vibrant colors to the farmhouse essentials, the home is built to last and ready for whatever the growing family brings its way.

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ABOVE: In the playroom, Darsi made sure to create a kid-friendly space, which included plastic chairs that are easy to clean, a simple white table, plenty of places to store toys and craft supplies and the perfect shade of red on the floor.

LEFT: A charming ruffled shower curtain ties in the themes of childhood and farmhouse style in the bathroom through patterns of roses, checkers and gingham. A built-in cabinet provides clean lines and storage.

OPPOSITE: This adorable pink girl's room combines the best of both children and farmhouse décor. The pink wallpaper keeps things youthful, while the vintage-inspired bed and white chandelier help the room fit in with farmhouse style.

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