



# Forever FARMHOUSE

A long-time farmhouse homeowner in Vermont stakes her claim on a new home that suits her family's needs.

**BY VICTORIA VAN VLEAR**  
PHOTOGRAPHY BY SUSAN TEARE

Our needs change at different times of our lives. Luckily, farmhouse style can accommodate them all. For this mother of three and grandmother of seven, a space where she could be comfortable by herself, but also play hostess to visiting family, was a must. That's where designer Mary Beth Stilwell of MB architecture + design came in. "She wanted a house that she could live in forever," Mary Beth says.

At first, the plan was to renovate the homeowner's current farmhouse, which she had lived in for 30 years. "The original farmhouse was right on the road with lots of trees, and didn't get any natural daylight," Mary Beth says. So they decided to start from scratch. The homeowner gave her old house away so it wouldn't go to waste, and then Mary Beth designed a new home on a different part of the Vermont property. "We positioned the house so it faced south and would get passive heating, and oriented the roof so she can put solar panels there when she wants to," she says. "It has a lot of natural light."

The interior architecture is also intentional. The ground floor is 1,500 square feet, and contains all the necessities for daily living. Then the second floor has an additional 700 square feet of guest space. "When guests are there, you can open the windows and the door at the top of the stairs," Mary Beth says. "But the first floor by itself is fully accessible and functional." Between its layout and positioning, the home is truly a forever farmhouse.

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