



Rethinking the Barn

A Horse Lover's Dream Is Realized at Mossy Creek Stables in New Hampshire

Architectural and Interior Design by Sharon Re of Elite Barn Structures

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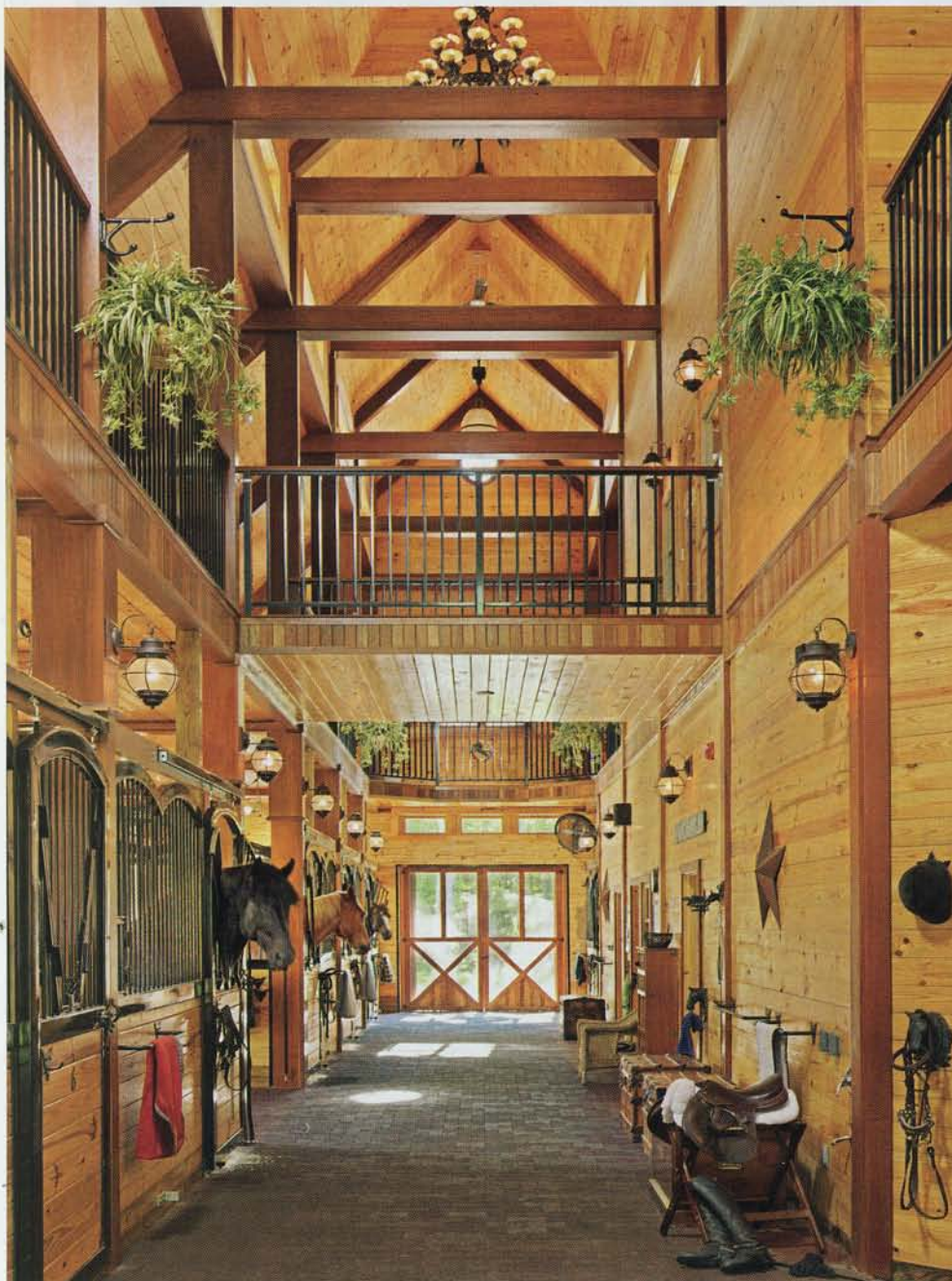


IT'S NOT EVERYONE WHO WANTS A DREAM barn, and it's certainly not everyone who can design one. But for Sharon Re, of Temple, New Hampshire, doing so turned out to be surprisingly easy: "I saw it in my head and just had to create it," she says. After sketching out her idea on a napkin, she turned to architectural designer Robert McDonald to realize it in three dimensions. "I wanted something that was fun but impressive at the same time, not just a cutesy barn," she explains. "I don't like normal, boring, in-the-box-type stuff."

Mossy Creek Stables, the two-story combined barn and caretaker's quarters they built, is set alongside some of the paddocks that dot the 50-acre property that Re and her husband, Chuck, own. From a distance, the 7,075-square-foot structure, with its monitor roof and flared cupola, fits seamlessly into the surrounding calendar-art landscape, complete with silos, copious ponds and ubiquitous white fences. Closer up, the building has a joyously idiosyncratic feel, with striking prow roofs and

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"Our goal was to design a functional horse facility that encompassed upscale living quarters," barn designer Sharon Re says of Mossy Creek Stables, which she and architectural designer Robert McDonald conceived for her 50-acre property in Temple, New Hampshire.



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unusual windows, including ovoid versions and even an eyebrow.

"I didn't want this building to be totally symmetrical," she adds. "I wanted it to be multidimensional in shape as well as style." Each side is distinct in both look and functionality. A post-and-beam porch marks the entrance to the residential section, for example, while the façade on the building's opposite side is defined by a line of stable doors. Above them, under a prow-roofed gable, a viewing porch—or

"cocktail lounge," as Re teasingly calls it—overlooks the adjoining riding arena.

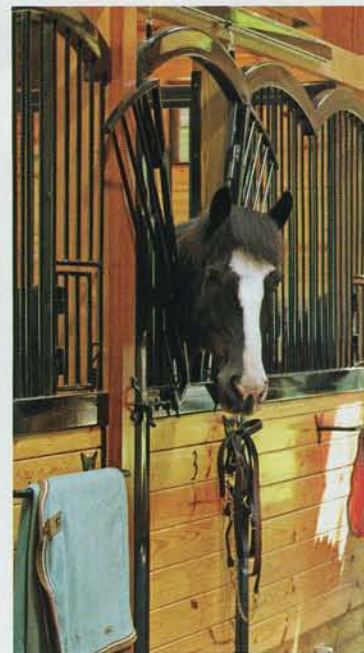
At the barn's main entrance, cedar fish-scale shingles, meticulously positioned around an oval window at the roof's peak, are typical of the attention to detail that prevails. "You never see stuff like that on barns," she says. Nor do you typically see much mahogany. Yet all the doors here, including the imposing sliding doors at the entrance, are of this hardwood. "The doors make the barn," she says. "You can't beat them."

The interior has an inescapably cathedral-like feel. The ceiling rises 36 feet—so high, a zoning variance was required—and the numerous windows that animate the façade (including a stained-glass transom over the entrance doors) translate, in the interior, into bright patches of light. The atmosphere is alive with sound, too: Piped-in "pet music" plays around the clock. ("It's all nature-y and relaxing, and they just love it.") As for the four-legged residents themselves, happily ensconced in eight high-tech stalls, she says, "They're my life."

While it may sound oxymoronic to speak of interior design in an equine structure, it's perfectly apt here. Re spent a year searching out whimsical, one-of-a-kind items in New England's numerous antiques stores. "I love that stuff. Why not put it in my barn, too?" she says. "Most of the barns I'd been around didn't have anything cool in them. I'd think, This is boring."

Hers is so *not* boring. The "little funky things" she favors are everywhere, from "old antique-y crazy horse handles" on

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ABOVE LEFT: Antique tack chests and towel holders line the main aisle of the two-story barn. "I wanted it to be grand but not conventional, a bit eclectic," says Re. The stall doors have yokes that open so that her eight horses, among them Dually (above), "can put their heads out."

Design Notebook



LEFT: Large windows and French doors bring light into the living room. In a sitting area, Re “made the ceiling just a shade or two darker so people can’t really tell if it’s a shadow or a different color.”

BELOW: On the barn side of the structure, McDonald installed a small porch on the second level so Re and her husband, Chuck, can view the riding arena and the back paddocks.

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the main doors (from a shop in nearby Peterborough) to the fox-head hardware, from a local supply store, that is used for hanging blankets and bridles along the sides of the stalls.

The living quarters are similarly unconventional. Re chose a fresh palette of lime and olive green for the walls and ceiling in the living area and red draperies for the windows, “because the colors are bright, fun and warm,” she says. Yellow glass light fixtures accent the ceiling. Faux-hide sofas and dark green leather chairs provide a comfortable spot to relax and

complement the green leather stools in the adjacent kitchen/bar area. And, as in the stables, there are “many horse-related antiques and objects,” says Re, including old grooming tools, a bit used by her father and a horse-head doorstop at the entrance, as well as photographs taken by Re.

Even before this equine structure was complete, people were coming from miles around to gawk at it. Who can blame its owners for wanting to build more? “We had so much fun doing this that we decided to start our own barn-building business,” Re reports. That enterprise, Elite Barn Structures, opened in 2006. □

