

101 WAYS TO SAVOR FALL!

Country Living

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Easy Ideas for Corn, Pumpkins, and More

CELEBRATE!

A Laid-Back Thanksgiving on the Farm

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Peel-and-Stick Reclaimed Wood (Really!)

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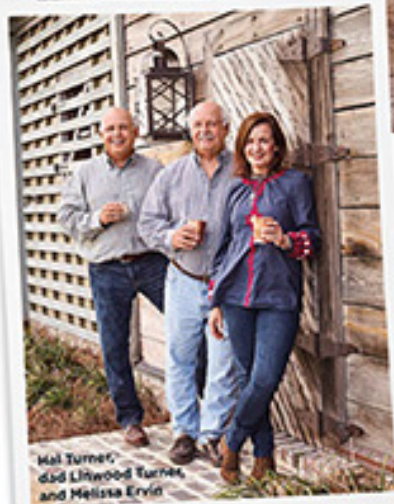


THANKSGIVING ON THE FARM

Land of Plenty

On an 800-acre farm fertile with two centuries of family history, this restored South Carolina smokehouse serves as solid, storied ground for multigenerational get-togethers.

written by LAURA KOSTELNY *photographs by* LAUREY W. GLENN
styling by MATTHEW GLEASON



Hal Turner and his sister, Melissa Ervin, can't imagine their childhood—and especially Thanksgiving Day—without the 800-acre farm in central South Carolina that's been in their family for more than 200 years. "We grew up nearby and spent so much time there. My grandparents lived in a big Victorian farmhouse built by our great-grandfather," Melissa says. "My

father and grandfather farmed cotton, corn, and soy beans together." And when he was old enough, Hal joined the team. "Every day after school, I jumped on my dirt bike, headed to the farm, and got on some piece of equipment and worked," he says.

But it was Thanksgiving that brought everyone together for play. Aunts, uncles, and cousins converged on the Turner farm every November with heaps of covered dishes, like Hal and Melissa's mother's famous pimento cheese, in tow. Meanwhile, their grandmother took care of the mains: turkey, dressing, and biscuits. Hal fondly recalls another Turkey Day tradition. "All our cousins would gather, and we'd play football and have mud clod fights," he says. "We broke more than a few windows on the house with bad passes."

Melissa and Hal eventually left for Clemson University—he studied mechanical engineering; she studied architecture. After graduation, neither

In the living room, Hal used brick pavers from his grandparents' old home for his new fireplace façade, and Melissa added a mohair-and-leather sofa (acquisitionsinteriors.com) with metal-and-wood side tables (bdjeffries.com) and a pair of zebra-print folding chairs.

had any real interest in farming. They both married and had children of their own. Hal started his own contracting business (www.thompsonturner.com) in Sumter, and Melissa moved to Charleston and opened an interior design firm (melissaerwinid.com).

But Hal had a change of heart in 2006, after a divorce and his kids were grown and gone. "My dad was still working the land, and I didn't want to be the first one in five or six generations to not continue operating the farm," he says. So he offered to buy out his father and two aunts, all of whom owned the property equally after his grandfather's death. Aunt Theo agreed to sell on one condition: The basketball hoop that had hung above the entrance of the



An old trunk that once belonged to a great aunt now welcomes guests in the entry. Spinning pickers from an old cotton harvester make for perfect hat hooks.



Hal had half of a cornmeal grinder laid in the concrete floor to create a unique "seal" for the home. The other half resides in the brick walkway outside the front door.





A kitchen island featuring a pipe base and flooring from an old high school is home base for holiday meal prep (esdcharleston.com).




The cabinetry throughout the house is crafted from heart pine salvaged from Hal and Melissa's grandparents' Victorian farmhouse.



smokehouse since the 1940s could never come down. It was an easy term for Hal to accept.

Figuring out a permanent living situation was less simple. The dilapidated farmhouse his grandparents had lived in needed way too much work, so he and his sister turned their eyes to Aunt Theo's beloved basketball hoop, and more importantly, the smokehouse beneath it. "We had such happy memories of that building," says Melissa. "We used to hang out in there with our grandfather—we called him 'Goose Foot'—all the time." Despite dirt floors and the 100 years' worth of equipment stored inside, she and Hal immediately saw the smokehouse's potential. They decided to work together professionally for the first time ever to convert it into a home cozy enough for Hal, but also a place the entire family could come home to during holidays.

Melissa's plans called for the building's original footprint to become the kitchen, and then she designed additional rooms on three sides of the

A rustic dining table set in a covered outdoor area. The table is covered with a white and blue striped tablecloth and is set with plates, glasses, and a centerpiece of autumn flowers and a roasted turkey. The chairs are made of dark wood with green cushions. A large, rustic chandelier made of a wooden wheel hangs from the ceiling. The background shows a green lawn, a wooden fence, and a field of tall grasses under a clear sky.

An old wheel makes
for a smart and
sturdy chandelier.

A custom reclaimed wood table (landrumtables.com) does double duty as a console and bar.



building, doubling the space to around 1,800 square feet. Before construction could even begin, Hal had to jack up the structure and pour a concrete foundation.

And while their grandparents' farmhouse eventually had to be razed, the siblings found some comfort in using materials from that home in the smokehouse renovation. "I tried to be a good steward," Hal says. Salvaged heart-pine wood, weathered bricks, and old pieces of farming equipment are woven throughout the home from floor to ceiling, popping up as rafters, fireplace pavers, and floor embellishments. At the end of the eight-month

construction process, the siblings had a brand-new home infused with a heaping helping of family history. (Still, no one would ever guess that it used to house cured meats.)

Now that Hal's living and working on the farm, the property is once again drawing friends and family—sometimes as many as 150—who gather (for holidays, weddings, engagement parties...) under a large outdoor pavilion built to mimic the architecture of the smokehouse. And while the grown-ups have officially passed the pigskin to a future generation, Hal knows some things never change: He has stocked up on extra windows.



REFRESHER COURSE

The Moscow Mule

Traditionally served in copper mugs (an easy way to warm up a fall tablescape), this vodka-based cocktail is a Turner family favorite. Here's their go-to recipe: Combine 2 ounces vodka and 3 ounces ginger ale in a glass. Top with ice and serve with lime wedges. Makes 1 drink.

Pimento
Cheese
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