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PERFECT SYMMETRY

Two modern wings enclose a turn-of-the-century smokehouse in Mayesville, South Carolina. Opposite: The cozy living room.



SMOKEHOUSE SANCTUARY

*BUILDING FOR THE FUTURE WHILE PRESERVING THE PAST
ON A SOUTH CAROLINA FAMILY FARM*

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The
Rural Cabin

When Hal Turner opted to pursue a degree in engineering at Clemson University, his father, Linwood, thought that might mark the end of his family's two-hundred-year-old farming operation in central South Carolina. Actually, Linwood says, he didn't really want Hal to take over his eight hundred acres of corn, soybean, and wheat fields, because farming's a tough business. Yet he didn't want his son to leave the tiny community of Mayesville, either.

Hal was similarly conflicted. During his childhood, the farm had always demanded ample amounts of work, but there were also plenty of chances to hunt, fish, and just be a kid in the country with his friends and his sister, Melissa. Although Linwood was still raising crops there, heavy damage from 1989's Hurricane Hugo had long ago convinced the family to abandon the property's rambling farmhouse. Linwood ran the farm out of a small barn behind the house, a thick-timbered structure originally built as a smokehouse by his grandfather

EXPERT ADVICE:

REPURPOSE VINTAGE MATERIALS AND REIMAGINE NEW USES FOR THEM: A MILLSTONE BUILT INTO THE FLOOR AND SURROUNDED BY TILE; HATS HANGING ON SPINNING PICKERS FROM AN OLD COTTON HARVESTER.

Eugene Linwood Cooper.

As the siblings grew older, Hal became a successful contractor in nearby Sumter and Melissa moved to Charleston and launched her own interior design firm. But about a decade ago, Hal turned his eyes back to the farm and that dilapidated, turn-of-the-century smokehouse. "People always came up here to do some thinking and get things

sorted out," he says. "It's been such a great hub for the family."

Renovating the farmhouse would have been an expensive, Herculean task; Hugo's massive wallop had proven a blow from which the home would never fully recover. The heart-pine bones of the smokehouse, on the other hand, remained solid. Hal and Melissa came to a bold conclusion: reimag-



ine the smokehouse as a hybrid that commingled the best elements of the farm's two remaining buildings into one home that could serve as Hal's primary residence and as a gathering place for the family. It would represent a study in cutting-edge architecture—1,800 square feet heated and cooled geothermally and insulated with radiant thermal barriers—while also showcasing the history of a Carolina family whose land grant dates back to the 1790s. It was important, Hal explains, not to end up with a place so big that it became impossible to maintain. "We wanted it to be something the family could hold onto," he says.

Hal first had to clear out a century of farm implements while Melissa designed plans to expand the smokehouse on three sides, encasing most of the original structure with cypress. Contractors set to work, painstakingly disassembling the farmhouse. They set aside its furniture, brick, and old-growth wood and then jacked up the smokehouse to replace its dirt floor with a concrete foundation.

"People thought I was crazy when I told 'em I was going to live in a smokehouse," Hal says. "But it's not your average smokehouse."

Melissa's design kept as much original detail as possible. The thick, diagonally slatted door remains, still haloed by a rusted basketball hoop. Just inside, the main room of the smokehouse now serves as an open kitchen and dining room. Cabinets were hewn from the farmhouse's yellow pine, and rafters where hams once hung still bear a seventy-five-year-old dusting of curing salt. The central table is a remarkable piece Melissa discovered in a secret antique haunt. It's a rectangle of wooden flooring lifted from the gym of a North Carolina high school, its surface etched with scuff marks and scribbles. Another reclaimed table, by the Charleston woodworker Capers Cauthen, serves as a centerpiece for the open-air pavilion, a separate structure Melissa designed and built just beside the smokehouse where the family can dine or lounge when weather allows.

She opened up the back of the smokehouse to build the living room, which is furnished with gorgeous, low-slung bookshelves—and books, including twenty vol-

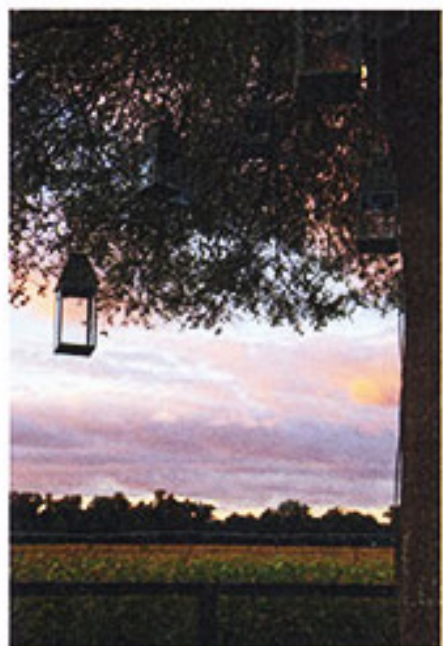


EXPERT ADVICE:

CONSIDER TWIN BEDS FOR A GUEST BEDROOM. THAT WAY, THE ROOM CAN COMFORTABLY SLEEP VISITORS OTHER THAN COUPLES.



umes from the circa-1924 *Library of Southern Literature* collection—also rescued from the farmhouse. Most arresting, though, are the fireplace of farmhouse brick and the beautiful mahogany windows that frame views of the farm's vast acreage and the World War II-era Ford tractor on which Hal learned to drive and plow. "I set it out there and one of my farm guys said, 'When



are you gonna move that old piece of crap?" he says. "I said, 'Well, never.'"

Now, Hal and Linwood run the farm together, and Hal reckons he'll keep it in the family. "I remember grumbling about living on the farm as a kid," he says. "But when you're sitting out here, and the sun's setting, and it gets quiet and you can hear the frogs, it's such a peaceful feeling. You get a deeper appreciation for it all." ☺

HAT TRICK

Clockwise from top: Amount of an nine-point buck keeps watch over the guest room; a view of the family's land from outside the open-air pavilion; a hat collection. Opposite: A glimpse into the master bedroom.