

New England HOME CT

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Calm & Collected

FORGE AHEAD

An eighteenth-century blacksmith's shop forms the heart of a well-loved home in Lyme.

Text by PAULA M. BODAH | Photography by JOHN GRUEN



HP Broom Housewright's Skip Broom found the blacksmith's shop whose rafters and framing form the great room in the home of Nancy and Paul FitzPatrick. Designer Carol-Ann Speros freshened the home with a neutral palette and a mix of traditional and contemporary furnishings.



Most mornings, Nancy FitzPatrick pours herself a cup of coffee and settles in by a kitchen window to greet the day. As she looks out over the five-plus acres of lawn and meadow and woods around the house she shares with her husband, Paul, she appreciates the peaceful environment. It's just her—and the animals. Lots of animals.

ABOVE: The great room's exterior vertical siding suits its eighteenth-century origins. **RIGHT:** Broom designed the house to look as though it evolved one addition at a time over generations. **FACING PAGE:** Wherever possible, Broom used materials he salvaged from old buildings around New England, including the floorboards and timbers.





LEFT: Speros paired a zinc-topped table from Restoration Hardware with the FitzPatricks' own antique chairs. The blacksmith shop's old timbers make a perfect exhibition space for the couple's art collection. **RIGHT:** The clean, contemporary kitchen has a touch of industrial style with its subway-tile backsplash wall, galvanized-metal sconces, and a vintage French Holophane pendant.



“Our yard is filled with wildlife,” she marvels. “We see fox and deer and rabbits and turkeys, and of course, coyotes.” Add to that the hawks that soar above, the butterflies that flit from plant to plant, and the neighbor’s horses grazing nearby, and the whole scene is the very definition of bucolic.

While that rural feel is a big part of what the FitzPatricks loved when they were house hunting, they were equally charmed by the neighborhood, an enclave of homes

built by Skip Broom and his crew at HP Broom Housewright. Broom acquired the thirty-five-acre expanse of land in the late 1980s with the goal of saving about-to-be-razed eighteenth-century houses around New England. “We’d buy a house for very little money, disassemble it, save everything worth saving, transport the pieces back to the site, and use them to build a new house,” he says.

Every one of the half-dozen dwellings



LEFT: Nancy FitzPatrick and Bodie relax in the foyer. **BELOW:** One of many vintage rugs in the home anchors a cozy sitting area at one end of the kitchen. **FACING PAGE:** Speros outfitted the library, which connects the great room to the bedroom wing, with horsehair wallpaper from Phillip Jeffries. Skip Broom's company crafted the built-in bookshelves.

while being respectful of the history.”

In this case, fresher translates to a lighter, brighter palette in shades of soft, warm grays that let the dark reclaimed wood stand out. The great room’s gas fireplace was converted back to wood-burning and reimagined as a clean expanse accented with a new bluestone hearth and a hand-forged-iron fire screen crafted by one of Broom’s craftsmen. The FitzPatricks’ collection of art, an eclectic mix of Dutch, French, and American Western art, looks right at home with the blend of antique and contemporary furnishings anchored by a custom Merida



was designed around a historic building that he found and rescued. At the core of the FitzPatrick house is the 1750s New Hampshire blacksmith shop that forms today’s great room. “This is the only home there that came from a commercial, rather than residential, building,” Broom explains. As with the other structures in the enclave, he took the shop apart and brought everything that was salvageable to Lyme. He designed the rest of the house to look as if it was constructed over generations, using varied woods, types of siding, and, in some cases, paint to reflect different periods. And everywhere it was possible, he used salvaged antique materials, from the great room’s old floorboards to the kitchen addition’s ceiling beams.

It may sound counterintuitive to talk about updating the decor in a house that’s meant to look old, but that’s exactly what interior designer Carol-Ann Speros was enlisted to do for the FitzPatricks, who are the home’s third owners. “The goal,” says Speros, “was to take it in a fresher direction





“The goal was to take it in a fresher direction while being respectful of the history.”

—INTERIOR DESIGNER
CAROL-ANN SPEROS

rug of wool and sisal with linen binding.

In the kitchen, Speros painted the cabinetry pale gray and treated the island to a new top of concrete. She replaced the heavily textured tile backsplash with a counter-to-ceiling wall of simple subway tile and wrapped the other three walls in Phillip Jeffries burlap. A vintage French Holophane light fixture adds a stylish twist to the subtly industrial ambience.

The FitzPatricks delight in their home, inside and out. “Carol-Ann is incredibly talented, and Skip has a great eye and great vision,” FitzPatrick says. “Together, we brought the house to the level it deserves.”

EDITOR'S NOTE: For details about this home, see Resources.

ARCHITECTURAL DESIGN AND CONSTRUCTION: Skip Broom, HP Broom Housewright

INTERIOR DESIGN: Carol-Ann Speros, Carol-Ann Speros Design

LANDSCAPE DESIGN: Novak Brothers Landscaping



CLOCKWISE FROM FACING PAGE, TOP: The bedroom wing's exterior sports a barn door that looks authentic but doesn't actually open. Look carefully: the transom and the small window—one of two in a guest bedroom—are the reason Broom crafted the exterior's nonfunctioning barn door. All of the bedrooms, including this sweet room for the grandkids, have wall-to-wall sisal carpeting.