

Family RETREAT

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PHOTOGRAPHY BY RANDALL PERRY

A New York farm remains with one family for generations, evolving over the years to suit modern-day needs.

"Here in the northlands, we do not forget how things were—back before the calm, when the courtyard still bustled like an apiary, and the bell tower sang itself awake." This excerpt from a poem written by GennaRose Nethercott in honor of Maple Mount Farm encapsulates the essence of what makes this farmhouse so special. In a modernized world, how do we keep our familial history alive? This was the question the team at Polhemus Savery DaSilva Architects Builders (PSD) faced as they worked on renovating this farm in upstate New York.

Originally built in 1807, Maple Mount was founded as a dairy farm. Today, the farm continues to thrive, producing a variety of crops. Design Principal of PSD, John DaSilva, states that the primary goal of this project was to "create a house that was an ideal facilitator for multi-generational family gatherings and family togetherness."

The farm is situated on a large expanse of land, which was originally used for cows to sustain the farm's dairy production. Today, multiple smaller barns and silos have been rendered unnecessary as the complex changed from dairy production to a crop-based farm, producing items such as alfalfa, corn and fruit.

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(above) In the new addition to the farm, they built a modernized kitchen and dining area to facilitate large family gatherings. Two tables, multiple windows and an open design create plenty of space for the extended family to relax and enjoy meals together.

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ADDING MODERNITY TO TRADITION

To unite the idea of family togetherness with the physicality of the existing farm structure, John looked to the great tradition of connected farm buildings. As the purpose of Maple Mount Farm changed over time, so did its structures. In 2015, John and his team focused on building an addition that connected the original Greek Revival house to the first barn, transforming what was originally a farm store into a new mudroom with a laundry room, bathroom and canning pantry. To keep the entire structure connected, they constructed a breezeway to join the new main house to the first barn, which the family now uses as a garage and workshop.

John was conscious of trying to tap into the tradition of connected farm buildings, but wanted to do so in a way that was not simply a historical replication. "This is what I hope is a forward-looking use of tradition," he says. To achieve this look, he used a vibrant red for the roofing of the additions and classic white for the walls. "These new buildings are a little more abstract, but they are respectful of what was there," John says.



(above) White cabinets provide classy farmhouse style that will look fresh for another few generations.

(left) Although the kitchen space was created for modern needs, it still boasts traditional aspects such as the farmhouse basin sink, complete with the original and still-functioning water pump.



(above) A guest bedroom provides space for family members staying at the farm during holidays. The large windows give a great view of the courtyard and fields beyond, and PSD utilized space efficiently by creating built-ins under the eaves.

(right) The old farm store that was part of the original structure was renovated and repurposed as a mudroom. It now serves as the main entryway into the home and provides space for the farm's regular family visitors.



The new additions to Maple Mount Farm stand out from the original structures with their bold colors, yet they blend with the overall aesthetic of the farm. They provide a new focus for the complex and serve as a common entryway for the family from the central courtyard.

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A FAMILIAL SPACE

The primary desire of the owners of Maple Mount Farm was to create a space for their extended family to gather. John kept this in mind with the renovations, adding a new living room, large kitchen and dining room, as well as a new guest bedroom and master suite. He utilized simple but robust spaces that would be ideal for comfortable, informal family gatherings. "The farm building complex is really as much a family retreat as it is the center of a working farm," John says.

INTIMATE RENOVATION

THIS WORKING FARM was a unique opportunity for John DaSilva of PSD. A self-proclaimed architectural history buff, John is passionate about spaces that have been in the same family for generations. John had the opportunity with Maple Mount to tap into his love for architectural history and create a space inspired by the tradition of connected farm buildings. "Understanding what we do today, there's no way that it cannot be connected to what came before," John says. Having intimate knowledge of the home's history can add a lot to the renovation process. John describes Maple Mount's owner as "intimately woven into that history." This invaluable historical connection helped make the renovation of Maple Mount Farm an unforgettable and successful project. The combined passion and history from John DaSilva and Maple Mount's owner was a catalyst that gave birth to the beautiful creation of what Maple Mount has come to be today: an exquisite combination of history and family.

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