



manufactured home undergoes epic transformation

‘DREAMS DO COME TRUE’

OPENING SPREAD: A total renovation of this Huntington Home transformed it into a modern farmhouse with open floor plan, a dream come true for the homeowners. These pages: Photos of the house before the redo. The house offers stunning views of the Worcester Range.



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Sometimes a dream comes together in the most unexpected way.

That was the case with a major renovation of a 50-year-old manufactured home into a farmhouse with a modern design concept that takes advantage of stunning mountain views and single-level living.

The dream for one couple from Houston was to find a second home to escape to—one in a completely different climate. They looked at different parts of the country, but family connections kept drawing them back to Vermont, where the husband’s father originally owned a farm in Waterbury Center, and where his brother still lives in the family farmhouse.

Much to the couple’s surprise, a house next door came on the market. They loved the location, not only because of the proximity to family, but also for the amazing views of the Worcester Range and the established perennial gardens.

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MOUNTAIN VISTA



SISLER BUILDERS returned the following summer to enlarge the deck, perfect for summer parties around the oversized fire table, and to install an outdoor shower on the southern side of the house.

WELCOME



THE FRONT ENTRY was updated, creating a space for a dresser the owner found in an antique shop in Texas. She altered it so it would fit the narrow entry area. The vignette is a mix of antique finishes, with wrought iron sconces from Restoration Hardware that tie together with the rest of the metalwork in the main living area. "The vignette is your initial introduction to what the rest of the house feels like in terms of texture, a mix of old and modern, and neutral colors," interior designer Amber Hodgins said.

OPEN LIVING



THE GOAL WAS TO CREATE an open living space with good flow, which was achieved by removing walls and the ceiling above the kitchen, and creating a cathedral ceiling with faux beams that add depth.

The corner with the fireplace and custom-built entertainment center backs up to the primary bedroom, with more custom cabinetry and a TV mount by Sisler Builders' woodworking shop.

SLEEPY
TIME



THE PRIMARY SUITE was reconfigured in order to enlarge the bathroom. The pendants are from Rejuvenation and the bed and side dressers are from Restoration Hardware.

Throw pillows pull the muted colors together and give a nod to the local postal service—and Stowe's zip code!

GOOD COOK



BY OPENING THE KITCHEN ceiling to the attic, the space feels airier and less cramped. Merillat cabinetry, stainless appliances, and an island with quartz countertops lighten the space even more. Floating shelves add a crisp, modern design feature.

The island pendants and kitchen sconces are both from Visual Comfort. The open layout takes advantage of the mountain views, and the wet bar adds a finishing touch.



MUD ROOM



THE BUILDER CREATED a larger mudroom by taking space from the garage, while still leaving room for two cars. A gorgeous half bath with wallpaper by Cole & Sons is at one end and a laundry room is at the other. Between, cabinets, cubbies, and a live-edge bench were designed, built, and installed by Sisler's woodworking team.

TABLE SET



THE FARMHOUSE TABLE came from Restoration Hardware. The chandelier above it is a custom piece designed by the owner with guidance from Hodgins. Iron Art in Stowe created the piece to look like branches. Drapery rods and the iron handrail were also custom made by Iron Art. "There are a lot of layers in creams and white, and I think this space is casual and elegant at the same time," Hodgins added.

The wall separating the mudroom from the kitchen is adorned with art in nature—canvases depicting three bird's nests. The owner found them in Texas and had them framed locally.



STORAGE UNIT



A HALLWAY TO AN OFFICE had shelving to one side and Sisler added the barn doors for a farmhouse look. Pendant lights were sourced online from Rejuvenation.

The house, however, was a different story. A Huntington manufactured home built in the 1970s, few improvements had been done over the years. The couple made an offer but were outbid.

A few weeks later the other party backed out and it didn't take long for a sale to transpire, and a virtual dream team came together to undertake a whole-house renovation. The couple hired a neighbor, architectural designer Rob Colbert of RMC Design in Waterbury Center, to help flesh out their vision.

"They spoke to a few other architects and liked that I was in sync with their ideas and close by so I would be able to have eyes on the project during the build process," Colbert said. "The original home was very compartmentalized. The rooms were small and you had to go through narrow openings to get from room to room. It felt closed off and dark."

"The owners wanted to open the spaces up as much as possible and create a flowing modern farmhouse feel, with more light and higher ceilings," he said. "There was no real mudroom, so the owners were willing to sacrifice garage space for a mudroom that includes a laundry and powder room."

Next on the scene was Sisler Builders, located just down the road in Stowe.

"When we met Steve Sisler, he exuded trust and confidence," the wife said. "It didn't take long to know Sisler was the crew we wanted for the job."

Bryan Kelley, project manager for the builder, remembers his first impression of the property. "The house, although dated on the inside, had a nice exterior and a beautiful landscape. A major renovation would revitalize the house and enhance the entire property."

Change inside and out

Colbert recommended interior designer Amber Hodgins of Amber Hodgins Design to the owners. "I brought Amber in early on to form a team right out of the gate. The homeowners had many solid ideas and Hodgins brought great cohesiveness. We were able to be expedient about design decisions because the team was already assembled."

Added Hodgins: "I worked on all the interior design requirements. The owner had a strong sense of what she wanted, and we spent a lot of time together. I did numerous drawings, working from Colbert's floor plan. I looked at everything cohesively. Textures and tones all have to be part of the same story."

The renovation retained the original footprint, but that's about it. All interior walls were removed in the main living area to create an open concept, with several beams spanning the length of the space. A powder room was removed from one end of the house and a new one was created near the mudroom at the home's entrance.



THE BARN AND SOLAR panels were already on site, but the exterior of the barn got a facelift to match the house. A bedroom on the second floor was upgraded to fit a double bed and a single—the perfect guestroom.

"Removing the walls required relocating a few essential rooms," Kelly said. "We reconfigured the main entry walk-in from the garage to the mudroom by taking some square footage from the garage, creating space for a laundry room at one end, custom cabinetry for storage, and a new powder room."

With unused attic space above the kitchen, Sisler tore out the ceiling and converted it to a vaulted one with antique beams to add volume to the desired open floor plan.

The transformation continued with Merillat cabinetry, stainless appliances, and an island with quartz countertops. White oak floating shelves created by Sisler's woodworking team gives the kitchen a smart, crisp, modern look.

"We went with Merillat because they have a great product line and are easy to work with, and we purchased them through Country Home Center in Morrisville," the owners said.

New oversized sliding glass doors open from the living room and primary bedroom to a large deck that spans the east side of the

house, where the mountain and pond views are best. A new fireplace with a raised stone hearth and mantel made of a live-edge beam that Hodgins found was created in a living room corner, and Sisler's woodworking team designed and installed custom built-ins on one side of the fireplace.

"One of the biggest challenges was creating the entire fireplace, hearth, and entertainment center that shared a wall with an audio-visual niche in the primary bedroom," Colbert said. "There was a lot going on between the walls—chimney flue, switches and outlets, an electrical and plumbing chase to the newly created upstairs bathrooms, and getting the stones placed properly for the hearth. We wanted to sacrifice the least amount of space for the guts of the layout, so a ton of coordination went into executing the design."

A hallway leading to an office featured windows on one side and built-in shelving the entire length of the hallway on the other. Sisler installed barn doors that close over the built-ins, creating a country look.

The owners wanted to keep a bedroom on the main floor, so beyond the living room is the primary suite, with enlarged closets, custom built-ins, and an en suite bathroom with Jack & Jill vanities.

Originally, two upstairs bedrooms shared a bath, which was converted into two separate bathrooms, one for an en suite bedroom, the other an entirely separate space.

Out went the old carpeting, replaced with seven-inch-wide French oak flooring. New windows and fresh coat of paint completed the rejuvenation. And it all took place during the pandemic.

"It took much longer than expected. Materials were delayed and the garage became a staging area so that when things arrived, we had a place to store them. The one good thing was we could take advantage of low interest rates," the owners said.

Hodgins said the timing during the pandemic featured all the usual glitches.

"There were so many delays, hiccups, and frustration along the way, but the result is stunning. It's beautiful and on point. I love that house and I'm very happy about how it came together. It's such a huge difference and it looks like a brand-new home!"

Colbert agreed. "We created a space that is bright and open and suitable for entertaining. We brought their vision to fruition and it transitioned from a mediocre house to a statement."

The following summer, Sisler Builders returned to install an outdoor shower and enlarge the deck that overlooks the stunning views of the Worcester Range.

Thanks to clear vision, a great team, patience, collaboration, and flexibility, what started out to be not exactly the owners' dream house, became a dream come true.

"It exceeded our expectations," the couple said. "We love it!" ■