

New Old House
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“Brandywine Valley Farmstead”
by Emily O’Brien





Located in the Brandywine Valley, the house is built on a high point of a large rolling field surrounded by hedgerows, woodlands, and colonial-era farms. **Opposite** The scale, composition, and materials of the buildings emulate the earliest buildings in the immediate region.



Brandywine Valley Farmstead

A NEW FARMHOUSE, RESTING ON 60 ACRES OF PENNSYLVANIA'S SPRAWLING PASTURES, LOOKS AS THOUGH IT'S BEEN THERE FOR AGES.

BY EMILY O'BRIEN | PHOTOGRAPHS BY ANDREW FRASZ





Left The interior stair hall is classically designed.
Below The living room is designed in soft blues and mellow yellows. **Opposite** The foyer is flooded with light from the transom and sidelights.

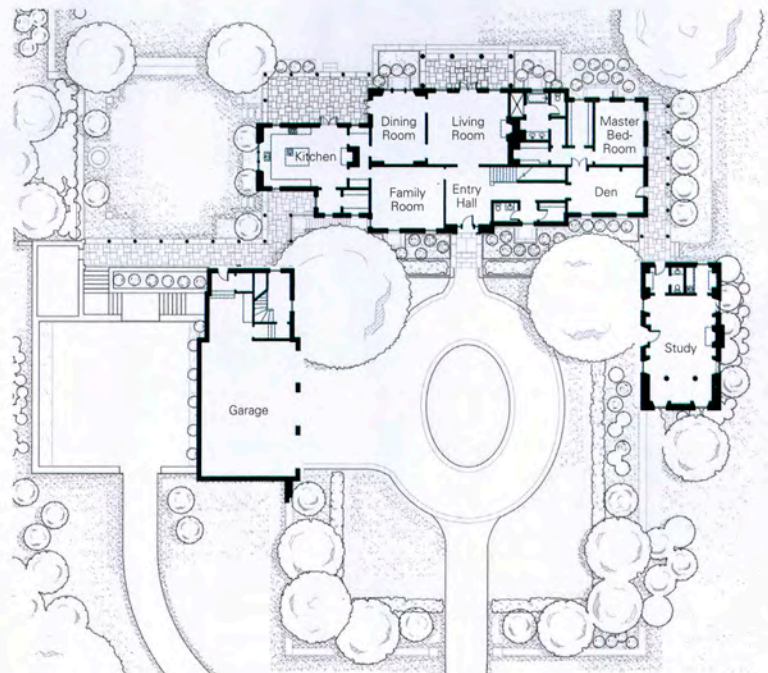


THE OWNERS were interested in developing a property that emulates the village-like qualities of farmsteads typical of rural Brandywine Valley,” says Mark Ferguson, of Ferguson & Shamamian Architects, LLP. It’s a picturesque Pennsylvania site—a high point of a large rolling field surrounded by hedgerows, woodlands and colonial era farms on 60 acres. The firm accomplished the homeowners’ wishes through the use of several structures, an additive composition, a modest one-and-one-half story height, connecting porches, and an enclosed yard.

Buildings were positioned to take advantage of an open site, imposing long views. The over 10,000-square foot new old farmhouse exudes both richness and charm. With five bedrooms in the main house and one over the garage, plus four full baths, there’s room for everyone.

“The primary challenge of this project was to shape a modern house in a prominent, exposed location to fit harmoniously within a legally protected landscape of fields and modest colonial era buildings without disrupting the historic and agrarian qualities for which the landscape is preserved,” says Ferguson.

In order to mimic the earliest buildings in the immediate region, the





scale, composition and materials were all carefully considered. As a gentle suggestion of age and settling, a subtle sag appears in the roof line. Typical regional building materials were used including a slate roof and stone walls, while the added combination of brick chimneys and trims (dove cotes), limestone sills, wood siding, trim, and shutters help create variety. Reference to local crafts can be found in the iron hardware, metal gutters, and bespoke metal lanterns. To ensure a sympathetic development, the Willistown Conservation Trust oversaw the project from start to finish.

Fluid Transition The entryway's classical references are a nod to a gentleman's farm. Taking advantage of sweeping views of the property's surroundings, the interior opens to the outdoors on all sides, making exceptional use of ample natural lighting. Porches serve as transitional spaces and offer a comfortable place to rest and recharge. Family entertaining comes easily in the oversized kitchen complete with a traditional raised fireplace made of slate and limestone. The living room was designed with American Classical references with well-proportioned trims, while a custom mantel and over-mantel anchor the

peaceful space. Ornamental motifs adorn the dining room ceiling.

Interior designer Franco Biscardi, of Brady Design, who worked on the farmhouse, knowing the overall goal was to create a country house that was both rich and comfortable for family life yet formal and interesting enough to be appropriate to its classical architecture.

"We had a great time filling the house with antique accessories and table-top items, and this was both ours and the clients' favorite part of the project—watching the rooms come alive with well-placed items of interest," says Biscardi. ◊ **FOR RESOURCES, SEE PAGE 114.**



Left The kitchen offers a farmhouse appeal.
Above The overall goal was to create a country house that was both rich and details and comfortable.
Right The Williamstown Conservation Trust oversaw the project. **Below** The dining room is kept formal.



Like the look of this farmhouse? Franco Biscardi and Brian Brady, of Brady Design, offer these top tips on approaching home design.

1. **Never skimp** on doors, floors, or hardware.
2. Make sure **the pieces are scaled appropriately** for the space.
3. **A mix of old and new** is always richer.
4. **Keep patterns subtle.**
5. **The framing** of a piece of art is just as important as the piece. (We did a lot of re-framing!)

