

The wall of glass opens the interior of the barn to the magnificent views beyond while maintaining the architectural integrity of the structure.



Barn Rebirth

These Cinderella structures had former lives as service buildings. Two amazing adaptations later, they are great examples of repurposed paradise.

Sometimes people get it just right. The restoration of a building to its former glory is always admirable, but the complete reincarnation of two barns into the perfect settings for civilized life is nothing short of astounding. Imparting a sense of personality and comfort into a space intended for utilitarian purposes can be hard to achieve without losing the essential qualities that make the building worth saving at all. We found two barn conversions that are each so well done that neither could escape being called “best.” Differing vastly in scale and style, these former service buildings find new life while showcasing the simple beauty of their original construction.

From Pony to Party

“When I was done with this project,” says architect John Blackburn of the Leesburg, Virginia, barn he was charged with saving, “I wanted people to drive up and have no doubt that this was once a barn. I didn’t want to lose what made this building special.” He achieves this, in part, by concealing the residential doors behind the original sliding barn doors. By adding under-floor heating to



the original floors, cumbersome ductwork does not interrupt the space. The original ceiling, really just the underside of the roof, became an important element of the interior. Insulation was laid on top of the original roof before a second layer of roofing was installed. This allows for efficient heating and cooling while maintaining the look of the time-worn rafters. The interior walls retain their aged appearance using a Structural Insulated Panel System (SIPS) that clads the barn's exterior and preserves the interior's integrity.

Because the barn serves as an entertaining area, its setting is integral to creating the right ambience. John visually increased the size of the already voluminous space by removing the entire wall on one of the gabled ends and replacing it with windows. The windows flood the entire room with natural light and reveal a view of the pasture and livestock beyond. The treatment is a very modern approach, but because the wall of windows stays within the original footprint of the building, it does not seem out of place with the more restrained facade of the barn.

Perfectly preserved but adeptly adapted, this magnificent structure gained new life. ▶

left: The cozy seating area takes advantage of the fire and the view, which remains unobstructed with the clever use of a slender stovepipe flue. *below, left:* A pass-through bar links the cooking area to the main space and provides casual seating. *below:* An ironwork balustrade in a tree-branch form imparts an organic touch.

