



The front of the house is accented with a large covered porch facing the forest beyond it. The dark brown of the cedar-sided house blends well with the autumn colors.

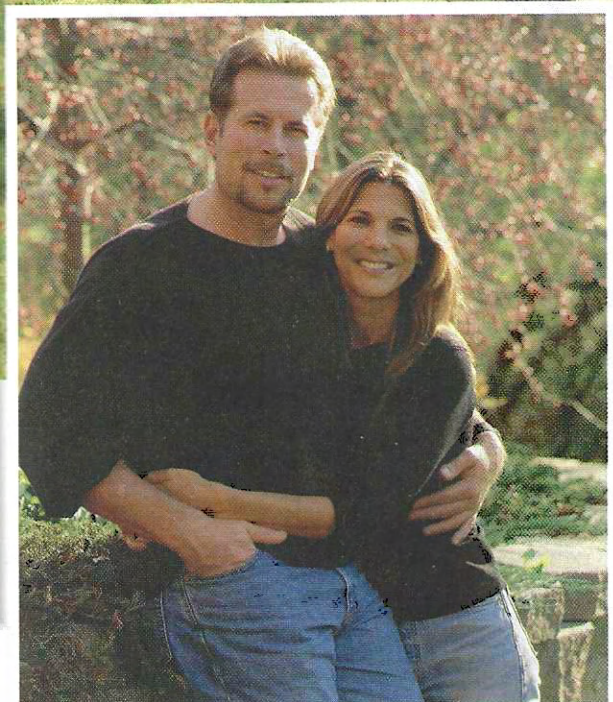
Home at Last

An old barn helps an Ohio house find its true identity

When I met my fiancé, Norm Dreyer, and he told me he loved all things rustic, I knew we'd be compatible... at least when it came to decorating a house.

As a transplanted, mountain-loving Coloradoan living with him in the quaint Midwest town of Lebanon, Ohio, I longed for the rustic beauty of the West. If I was going to settle temporarily in Ohio, then I needed a piece of that mountain magnificence inside my new home.

Norm's 3,000-square-foot, cedar-sided timber home was ready for a makeover that would reveal its true character. Built on a 5-acre forested lot, off a twisting rural road, the structure on the outside looked like a home you'd see perched on a mountainside overlooking a ski slope. Inside, however, it was having an identity crisis. Norm's former spouse had chosen splashy, silver accented wallpaper for one wall while paisley designs graced another. Flowery valances on



Above: The three-bedroom home sits on a shallow slope surrounded by a large lawn on all sides.

Left: Norm Dreyer and fiancé Genevieve Schmitt gave their home a rustic makeover.

the bedroom windows matched the bedspread and the lampshades. In the dining room, the puffy pink valance adorning the window matched the dining chair seat cushions. Plain oak furniture stood on wall-to-wall carpeting. Outside the house was screaming rustic and Western; inside it was dated Victorian.

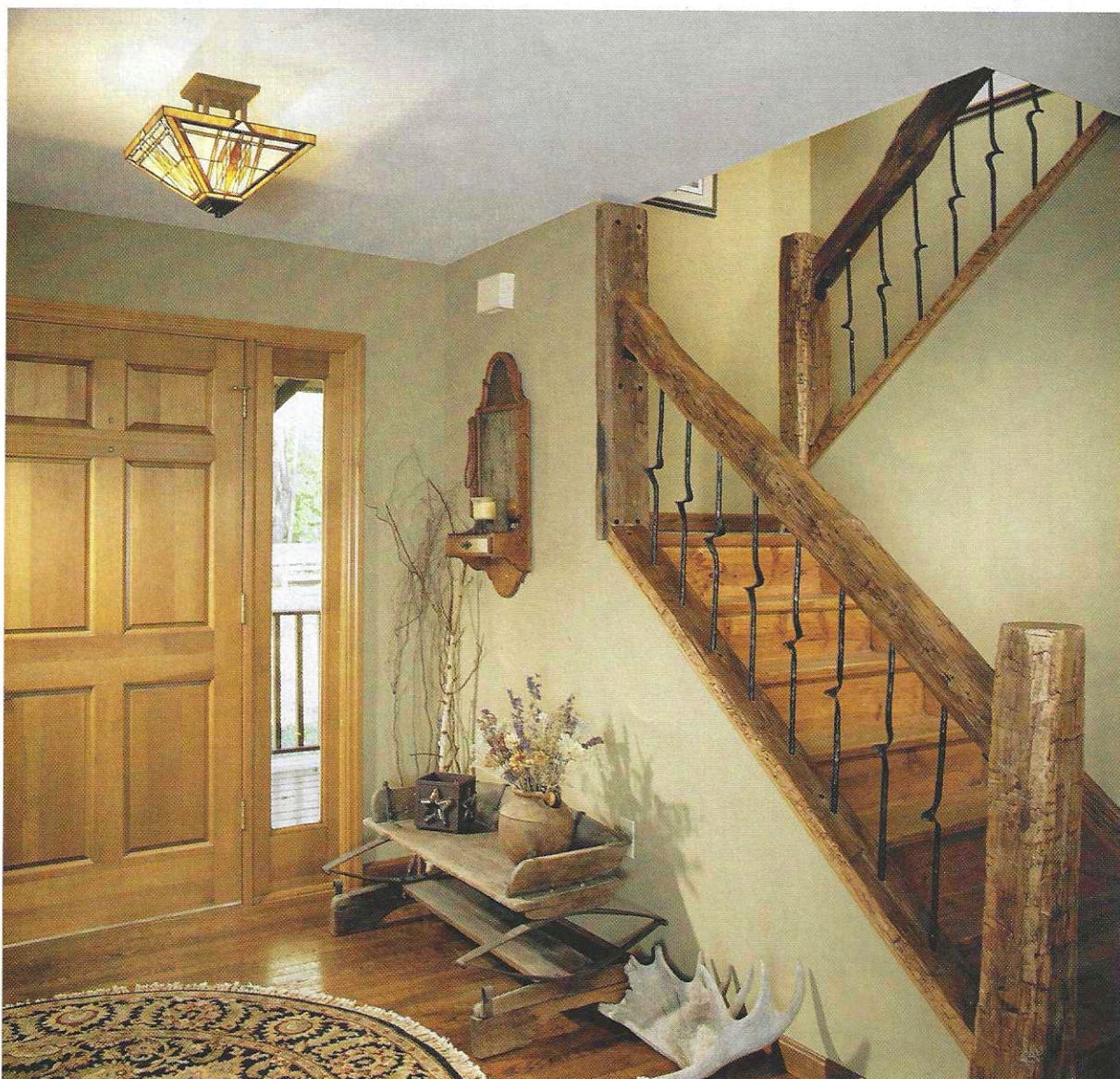
Now single, Norm had an opportunity to renovate the interior so it matched the exterior. The dream for the house he envisioned 13 years before could finally be realized.

Out With the Old

Norm removed every inch of wallpaper and carpeting, and his son-in-law, Clayton, sledge-hammered through the dated beige ceramic tile that covered the dining room and kitchen floor. All the windows were stripped of their coverings, including the metal blinds that shielded the light and view on this totally private lot. Norm tossed or handed down to his kids all the outdated furniture. "I had a clean canvas with which to create my rustic masterpiece," Norm explains.

Norm and Genevieve enjoy the outdoors by having meals on their large deck as often as possible.





Just as Norm had stripped the house, I moved in. It was perfect timing: My ideas fresh from the West could complement the ones brewing in Norm's mind for more than a decade.

The centerpiece of our home renovation would be old weathered barn wood. We both have a passion for the aged timber and the historical character it represents. We discovered a 100-year-old barn on a 90-acre farm near our home about to be torn down and replaced with a new high school. We negotiated a modest price for the aged structure then began removing the rough timbers piece by piece. While Norm and his son, Nash, climbed the rafters with crowbars in hand, I combed every square inch looking for rusty embellishments and antiques that could be used as decoration.

Over a summer, Norm, a health-care industry executive by day, tapped into his inner carpentry creativeness in his spare time precisely measuring and sawing each plank to fit

The staircase boasts a new railing made from hand-hewn beams gathered from the old barn. The couple purchased the old stagecoach seat on one of their many antiquing adventures.

the walls of the great room, the master bedroom and one wall in the rec room. First, though, we painted the bare walls black, then, nailed two horizontal furring strips across them on which to mount the pressure-cleaned floor-to-ceiling vertical planks. "While it was a lot of

work to do myself, it was a labor of love breathing new life into those old timbers by marrying them to my home's walls," Norm recalls. During the installation process, he often reflected on the history each plank represented.

Walls that didn't receive barn wood treatment got a new coat of paint, colors chosen from a palette of brown, green and red earth tones.

Not ones to leave any valuable piece behind, we sawed off hand-hewn beams from the ceiling of the barn, treated them with mahogany-colored stain and then converted them to stairway and loft railings held together with wrought iron balusters commissioned from a local blacksmith. The rest of the beams were bolted to custom-made wrought-iron frames



to create our one-of-a-kind headboard and nightstands for our master bedroom.

Other pieces of treated barn wood were cut to frame the mirrors in the three bathrooms. Rusty barbed wire, old door hinges and antique nails I found on or near the barn were glued or nailed to the mirror frames as decoration.

Rustic Refinement

From that point on, we hired contractors to do the rest of the work. Black-flecked granite replaced the dated tile countertops in the kitchen and laminate counters in the baths. The cabinets were refaced with a walnut wood laminate accented by brushed nickel hardware. The kitchen and dining room floors, previously tile, were outfitted with hardwood.

The floor of the home's centerpiece, the

The foyer opens up to the great room with vertical planks of barn wood lining the walls. Above hand-hewn barn wood beams and cascading twisted-shaped balusters form the railing of the loft hallway on the second floor.

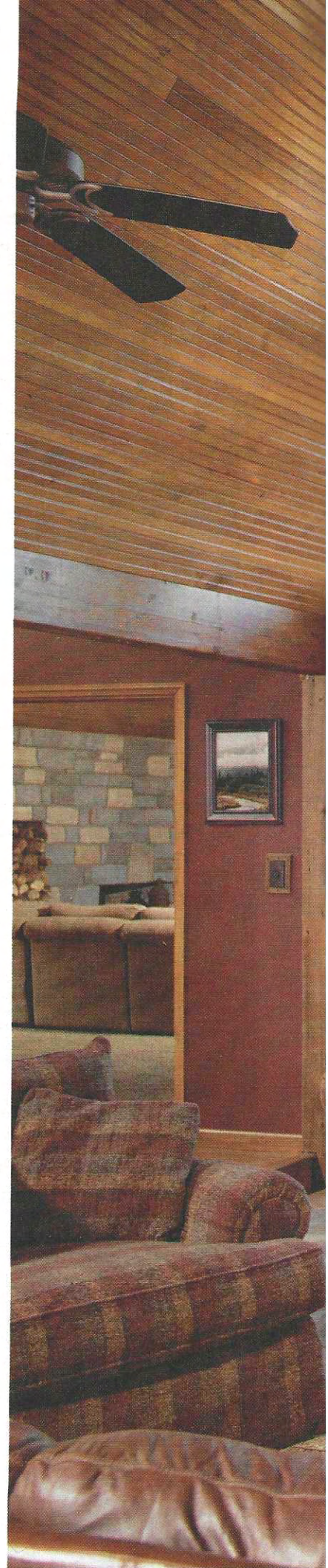
great room with its 28-foot-high Kentucky limestone fireplace, was inlaid with irregular shaped stone tiles in shades of gray, green, alabaster and a color called

Colorado Red. Similar earth tones were chosen for the square ceramic tiles used in the bathrooms—including the master bath, which underwent a complete makeover.

The old jetted tub and plastic shower stall were removed, making room for a large, dual-showerhead walk-in stone enclave. Our design included walls lined with faux river rock stone in warm earth tones, and a slab of shower glass laser-etched with a mountain scene copied from a photograph we shot while on a backcountry trip to Alaska.

Finishing Touches

We capped off our home renovation with rustic style furniture, chandeliers and





The stand-alone 28-foot Kentucky limestone fireplace in the great room is a dramatic centerpiece to this cozy gathering place. Fabric for the overstuffed chairs was chosen because the colors and texture blended well with the room's earthy palette.

Oriental rugs—some from High Point, North Carolina, some from out West. While surfing the Internet, Norm found custom barn wood furniture designer Steve Burlison of Stoney Creek Woodworks in Estes Park, Colorado, from whom we purchased several pieces—including our 10-foot dining room table. “With our love of barn wood, finding Steve was like stumbling onto a goldmine,” Norm says.

One wall in the recreation room received the barn wood treatment, and was then accented with old leather chaps and a rusty bridle. The corner is now an inviting breakfast nook with a view of the backyard.

Our new rustically elegant home is accented with antiques from our travels. What a transformation: The décor is a wonderful complement to the exterior of the house and its wooded surroundings. Walking through the front door, one senses a seamless transition of environments from outside to inside. For me, the natural wood, earth tones and Western accoutrements pluck at my soul just enough to remind me of the West while



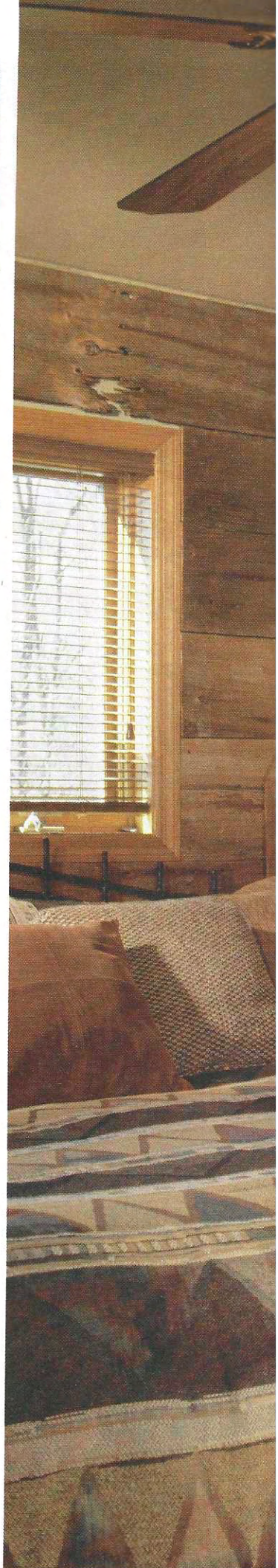


The 10-foot barn wood table and curio cabinet were purchased from Stoney Creek Woodworks in Colorado. Above the table hangs an authentic wagon wheel chandelier from Roc Corbett Custom Lighting in Big Fork, Montana.



Above: Genevieve and Norm brushed on just one coat of textured paint to give the master bath's walls an aged, rusty look. The barn wood mirror reflects the river rock that lines the walk-in shower.

Right: The barn wood dresser from Stoney Creek Woodworks in Estes Park, Colorado, was sized to the couple's specifications so it would fit in this corner of their master bedroom.



my feet are temporarily planted in the Midwest. **THI**

Genevieve Schmitt is a freelance writer who divides her time between Ohio and Montana.

RESOURCES

Roc Corbett Custom Lighting,
www.roccorbett.com, (406) 837-5823

Stoney Creek Woodworks,
www.stoneycreekwoodworks.com, (970) 577-1775

Norm nailed barn wood planks horizontally in the master bedroom to make the small room appear larger. The one-of-a-kind headboard is custom-made from hand-hewn barn wood beams and wrought iron.

