

# AMERICAN FARMHOUSE

EASY IDEAS FOR  
*Summer Style*

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## DIY

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*Flea Market  
Charm*

# Bayside Retreat

Discover the waterfront charm of this farmhouse in Maryland.

BY MICHELLE MASTRO  
PHOTOGRAPHY BY JOHN COLE

Finding a farmhouse-style home set against an inlet of Chesapeake Bay, rather than in the middle of a country town, might seem unusual. But for interior designer Keira St. Claire at Anthony Wilder Design/Build, farmhouses can fit any landscape.

## SEASIDE FARMHOUSE

"The client wanted a farmhouse with a clean aesthetic, so for this project she wanted to go a little more modern," Keira says. "It was all about subduing the interior to give the exterior a voice." The home is located in St. Michaels, Maryland, a town rooted in the easygoing atmosphere of the bay, and Keira's client wanted the home to reflect the bay's laidback appeal.

The home incorporates cooler shades for its exterior. The barn-inspired garage has a greenish-gray hue, while the home itself features a light French gray. Inside the home, visitors are greeted with warmer shades in the living room.



*Tip*  
 MAKE A ROOM FEEL COZY BY USING WARMER COLORS SUCH AS YELLOW OR GOLD. THIS ESPECIALLY HELPS THE ROOM FEEL WELCOMING DURING THE WINTER MONTHS.

With warm tones and soft fabrics, the living room is full of life. The space utilizes unstained wooden shelves to give a natural feel to the home. "The subtle fabric of the chairs gives a focus to the outside view," Keira says.

So Keira created a coastal farmhouse retreat where blue-and-white wallpaper patterns mimic the ebb and flow of the shoreline, pendant lights "look like they came off the bottom of the ocean" and unique chandeliers dangle on high beams resembling driftwood. "No clutter, no overpowering elements," Keira says. "I focused a lot on texture and using natural materials to provide depth to the rooms, while keeping a clean look."

**LAIDBACK FAMILY RETREAT**

Originally the homeowner hired a builder to make the blueprints, but Keira stepped in to support the design of the home, making a few changes to the plans here and there. The decision to build a farmhouse-style home on the shore was a "spontaneous choice," Keira says. "They were visiting St. Michaels, and they thought about having a retreat home."

**3 EASY WAYS TO ADD FARMHOUSE STYLE INSIDE**

**1. NATURAL MATERIALS.** Add natural materials like rustic wooden pieces, wicker baskets or quilted cotton throws. Part of the appeal of being immersed in farmhouse style is feeling closer to nature, so don't be afraid to bring the outdoors inside.

**2. ANTIQUES.** Keira wanted to avoid adding clutter to her client's home. But selecting a few key items like special antique finds adds history to the space. Many of the antiques in the home, Keira says, were actually found around the local area, giving the newly built home a link to the town and its history.

**3. FARM ANIMALS.** An easy way to invoke farmhouse style is to use artwork featuring farm animals. Country-style kitchens can use a porcelain chicken figurine or two and a basket of faux eggs to give that farm fresh foodie appeal. With this design, the look of the home was about gesturing to the beauty of the sea.



A farmhouse sink gets a modern makeover with bright polished nickel faucets and hardware on the cabinets. The island's tabletops are poured concrete, while the pendant lights give a nautical look.

However, plenty of thought went into the house. Rooms lay in preparation for future grandchildren, and the massive area above the garage—made to resemble a barn—provides wonderful additional space for visiting friends and family. "It might not seem like it, but the custom French beds in the loft could easily sleep two in each," Keira says.

#### COASTAL LIVE-IN SPA

With its crisp grays, robin's-egg blues and luminous whites, the guest room with coordinating twin beds feels like a stylish resort. "I wanted to create a calming space to give focus to the beauty of the outdoors," says Keira. In the living room, earthy colors and a few

**Tip**  
USE A MIX OF ANTIQUES AND NEW ITEMS TO AVOID OVERSPENDING. AS KEIRA DID HERE WITH THE RUSTIC PENDANT LIGHTS IN THE KITCHEN.

key pieces on the bookshelves provide a cozy farmhouse appeal, while reclaimed wood and metal details root the space in a simple yet elegant country sensibility.

A few details also echo classic farmhouse style. "The large porch and front columns create a traditional farmhouse-style exterior to the home," Keira says. "The screened-in patio has brick, a classic detail of many farmhouse-style homes." But she also wanted to make sure the home reflected its Chesapeake location. "I didn't want to use anything too bold to distract from the landscape. Everything in the home gave a nod to the bay," says Keira. From the blue of the front door to the kitchen backsplash—hand-cut and hand-dyed to mimic the bay's water—the home is full of allusions to the bay's splendor.



(top, right) The kitchen stove was imported from France and was selected for its sweet robin's-egg blue. The backsplash catches the light bouncing off the water outside the windows.

(above, right) The home's screened patio serves as a breezeway for the kitchen. Brick—a staple of farmhouse aesthetic—is used as flooring under a distressed table, hammered to appear older than it is and set with several open-weave wicker chairs.

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This space can be found above the family's garage. A loft, it can sleep several guests with its custom French beds, each deep enough to hold a couple of adults. The room's high beam, Keira says, references driftwood.

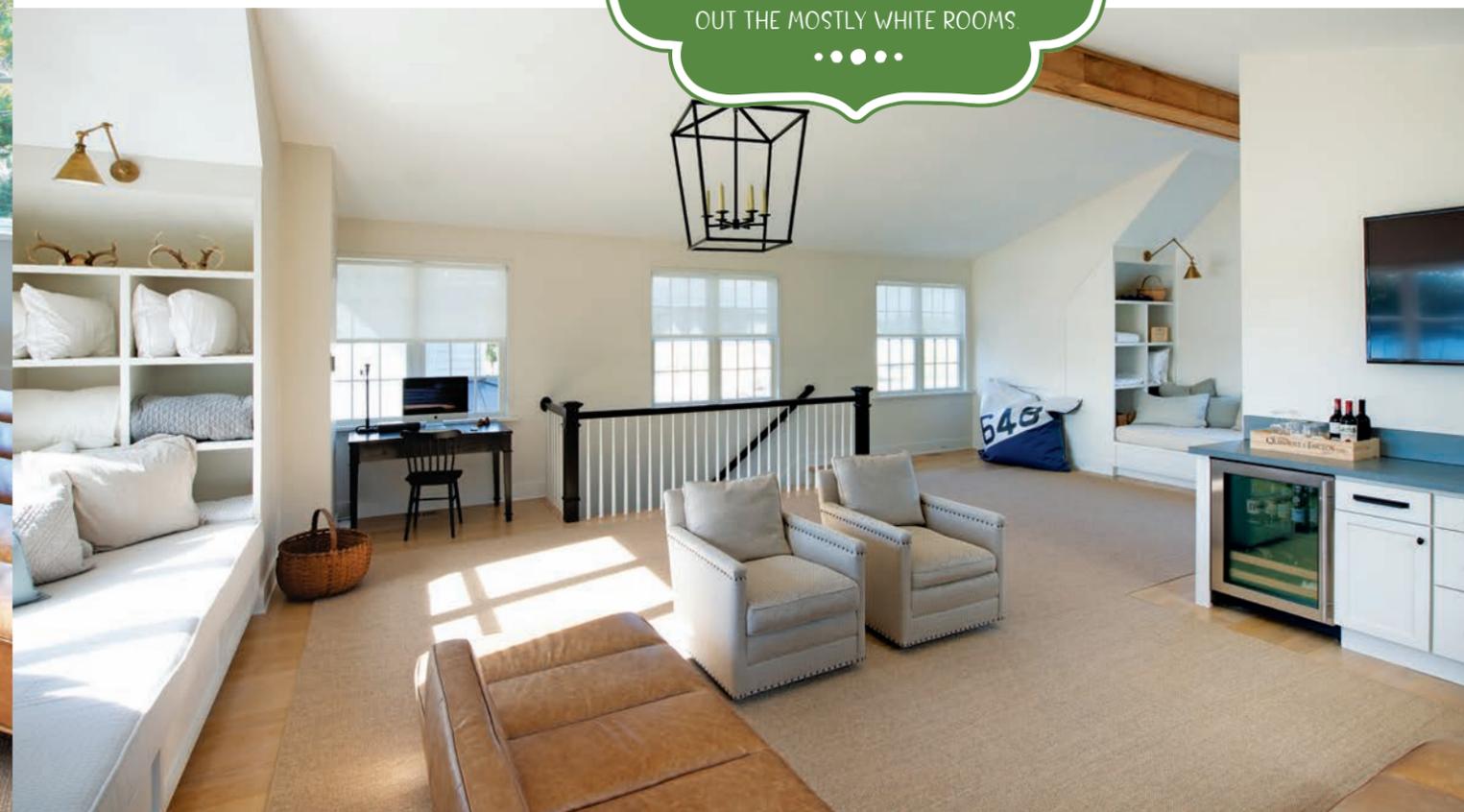
(opposite, top left) Many of the antiques, such as these trunks, were found in nearby St. Michaels, giving the newly built home a sense of history.

(opposite, top right) This wallpaper, the most concentrated area of color in the whole home, was meant to represent the ebb and flow of the water against the shoreline.



### Tip

LESS IS MORE. BUT DON'T BE AFRAID TO PLAY WITH PATTERNS. KEIRA USED SEVERAL PATTERNED ELEMENTS THROUGHOUT THE HOME TO BALANCE OUT THE MOSTLY WHITE ROOMS.





“I focused a lot on texture and using natural materials to provide depth to the rooms, while keeping a clean look.”

If the bay is so close to the house, why have a pool as well? “The pool is full of saltwater,” Keira says. “We made the bottom of the pool darker to make it seem like a natural body of water.” It’s great to have the variety of options, and “besides there are lots of jellyfish in the bay during the summer months,” says Keira. A saltwater pool sounds like a great alternative to jellyfish stings.

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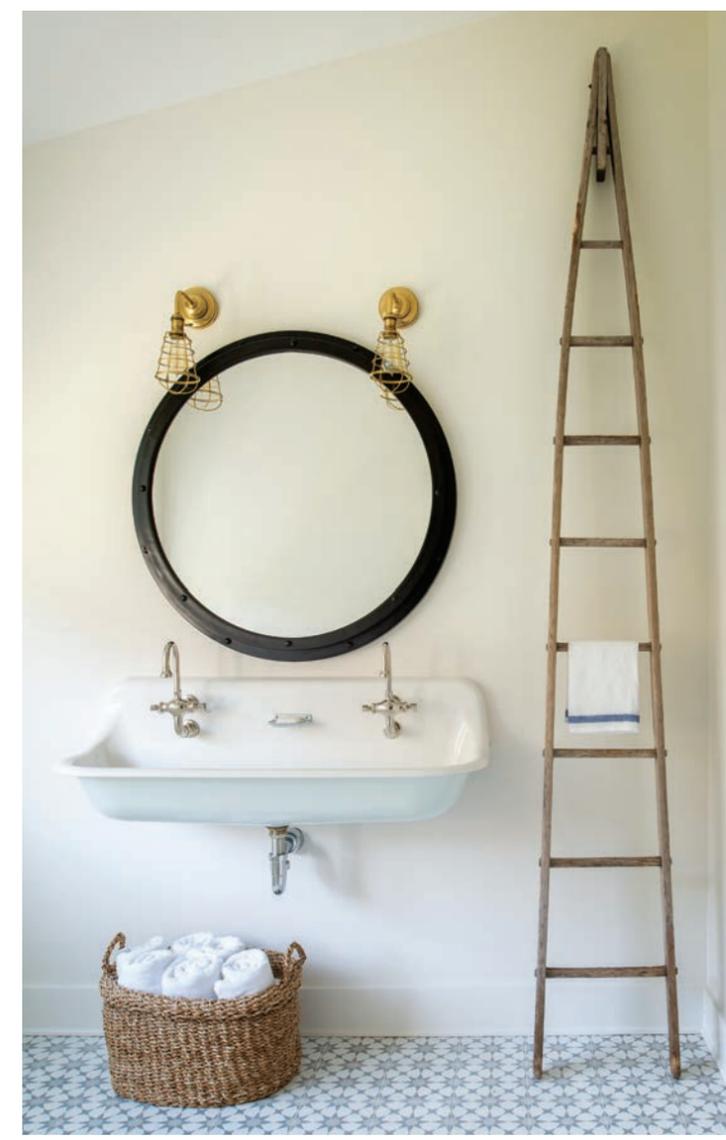
Many of the rooms have low ceilings to provide a cozy feel. Sage-green wallpaper adds a hint of calm tranquility to make slumber easy. (opposite, top, left) An array of windows lets natural light into this bedroom, along with a cozy window seat and subtle texture in the floral valances and wood bed frame.



The deep windows allow guests spending the night amazing views looking out onto the bay.

(top, right) The pool house bathroom includes several nautical pieces. Oars lean against the wall and a caged light hints at a captain's quarters. (bottom, left) Swinging doors can suggest a farmhouse-style stable instead of a traditional poolside shower space. (bottom, right) With fewer items, the decluttered bathrooms showcase a few central pieces, like unique nautical items.

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# CREAM OR White Trim?

There are pros and cons to each option, but the best choice will always be to make sure the trim complements the rest of your home before you start applying new paint.

**WHEN TO USE CREAM TRIM:** Warm colors look best with a cream trim. "A warm color mixed with a bright white makes the home feel too manufactured," says Keira. Unsure if your color is on the warmer side of the color spectrum? Look for the underlying color. "Some greens, like navy green, have warmer tones like yellow hidden in them," says Keira.

**WHEN TO USE WHITE TRIM:** Save this color palette for cooler shades. For example, the green of this home's garage has more gray in it. "This green falls on the colder side of the color spectrum, so it made sense to pair it with a white trim," Keira says. But don't be afraid to mix colors on the same side of the spectrum. For example, the exterior of this farmhouse is painted a light, French gray, while the garage has a unique greenish gray, drawing the eye to the garage and its classic barn aesthetic.



The pool in back is full of saltwater for when the family wants to escape the stinging jellyfish that dog the bay in the summer months.



## KEY EXTERIOR ELEMENTS FOR Farmhouse Style

Learn from Keira about which architectural elements will help your home give off a distinct farmhouse look.

**A BIG FRONT PORCH.** "This is a very specific look, an iconic American look," Keira says. Large porches, patios and especially spacious, wraparound verandas are crucial structural elements of farmhouse style. A porch swing and colorful throw pillows add a comfy feel to the space and give passersby a glimpse into your interior style.

**COLUMNS.** "The classic farmhouse has these," Keira says. Of course, if your home doesn't have columns, you can still incorporate farmhouse style into the look of your home's exterior. Keira suggests adding trim for a farmhouse vibe and to make your home's paint job pop.

**SHUTTERS OR A GABLED ROOF.** These elements provide texture to the exterior and create depth. "Subtle choices can create a farmhouse look," Keira says. "Without texture, the home might lack depth and feeling." For the Chesapeake home, Keira opted for cooler colors inside, but incorporated a lot of texture to add interest.