

renovation
merit

farmhouse, virginia

rill & decker architects

bethesda, md.

The owners of this rural Virginia farmhouse, parts of which date back to the 1750s, wanted what so many modern families want: larger rooms that make better sense. “They wanted more breathing space,” says architect Anne Decker. “Before, the house was compartmentalized and didn’t flow well. We tried to create a heart to the home while being sensitive to honoring the old house.”

Inside, the renovation translated into bigger—and better—versions of most of the existing public rooms downstairs, plus an additional bedroom and bath upstairs. What was once a series of cramped rooms that jogged back and forth along the first floor is now a kitchen-centered, open plan that puts formal living on one end of the house and informal living on the other.

Outside, the architects used disjointed roof lines to give the impression that rooms have been added gracefully over time. The whole package is tied together with a series of design touches that reinforce a familiar—and charming—farmhouse vernacular: wide-plank, heart-pine floors; a gutsy stone fireplace; a barn-red standing-seam metal roof; and flagstone pavers on a simple but now more welcoming front porch. It is, said the judges, “transformed in a way that’s inventive.” —k.s.



Architect Anne Decker retained the rambling nature of the original farmhouse (left) but gave the new elevation some punch. Inside, the plan now serves a modern extended family, with plenty of room to relax.



principal in charge / project architect: Anne Decker, Rill & Decker Architects; **designer:** David Benton, Rill & Decker Architects; **general contractor:** Potomac Valley Builders, Poolesville, Md.; **landscape architect:** Lila Fendrick, Chevy Chase, Md.; **interior designer:** Julia Overton, Arlington, Va.; **project size:** 4,080 square feet; **construction cost:** Withheld; **photographer:** Gordon Beall.
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