

home *on the* ranch

ONE COUPLE FOUND A NEW LIFE ON AN OLD HOMESTEAD
AND BUILT THEIR DREAM HOUSE WITH AUTHENTIC MATERIALS
AS AN HOMAGE TO CLASSIC FARMHOUSE STYLE.

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THIS PHOTO Jennifer Horowitz, along with her husband, Glen, envisioned life on the ranch in Texas through the lens of a front porch. Classic porch furniture sits on pavers, chosen instead of the more standard wood due to their durability. **OPPOSITE** The house faces a pasture on the 56-acre ranch. "We end all our days on the porch," Jennifer says, "with the crickets singing and the owls hooting back and forth. They remind us where we live—and why."



JENNIFER HOROWITZ LIVES FOR THE GOLDEN HOUR—THAT magical time when the sun descends behind the ridge of trees, and the family’s cows congregate on the fence line as if to enjoy the sky’s colorful show, too. Jennifer and her husband, Glen, meet on the porch every evening for a long, slow exhale while they rock in their favorite chairs and take in a view they always wanted.

“We had been living a busy life in Fort Worth, and one day I just said to Glen, ‘I need to live in the country—it’s in my DNA,’” says Jennifer, who was born in Hawaii and whose grandparents raised Arabian horses on the island of Oahu. The couple found a listing for a 56-acre ranch near the small town of Whitesboro, Texas—about an hour and a half north of the city—and they made an appointment to see it immediately to determine whether the pictures from the listing were too good to be true.

“As it turns out, the ranch was even better than we imagined,” Jennifer says. “We drove through a tunnel of century-old trees, discovered a spring-fed creek, groves of pecan trees, the old barn, and thistles covering a hillside. We got married at a mansion called Thistle Hill, so we took it as a sign this place was meant to be ours.”

The couple bought the property and named it Thistle Hill Ranch, and Jennifer, an interior designer, began mapping out her forever home. Originally settled in the 1850s, the ranch had a tiny cottage—which the Horowitzes lived in for two years and now rent as an Airbnb—but it wasn’t big enough for the family of four.

So they searched for the new home’s site. “We spent so much time wandering around the pastures, looking for the perfect place for our house, and when I saw this particular spot on the back side of the landscape, I told my husband this was where I wanted to put it—to take in the expansive view and all the future sunsets,” Jennifer says.

She slowly designed the house in her head, then on paper, and finally with an architect—after two years of researching historical farmhouses. “I wanted it to look like the pioneers had built it, and it had slowly been added onto over time,” she says. Jennifer sourced every material, including the wide-plank knotty floorboards, a metal-clad cast-iron bathtub, and the massive limestones used on the front porch steps and fireplace.

When decorating the light-filled spaces, Jennifer put her antiques skills to good use and outfitted the house with pieces that tell stories

TOP LEFT The limestone on the fireplace inspired the blue-grays used elsewhere as an accent color. Jennifer designed it to look like it was from the 1850s, when the ranch was established, and hung her grandfather’s rifle on it for more authenticity. **ABOVE LEFT** Jennifer and Glen share the rewards and lessons of ranch life—including breeding cows and caring for horses and dogs—with their two sons, Preston, 19 (far left), and Landen, 17. **LEFT** The two-story foyer demanded something dramatic, so Jennifer bought this floor mirror on clearance (due to a hairline crack) and placed it on top of a console.



THIS PHOTO Old beams and classic furniture add a sense of history and character to the vaulted living room, which is bathed in natural light. "Our builders kept asking us if we had any walls planned, because we kept adding windows everywhere," Jennifer says.



OPPOSITE Most appliances are hidden behind closed doors. Landen enjoys the 10-foot island, which seats a bevy of teenage boys and extended family on a regular basis. Jennifer designed the painted wood range hood to look like antique zinc for a rustic vibe. **BELOW** Jennifer found the laundry room sink on Amazon and created a skirt for it to hide the cats' litter boxes. **RIGHT** Because the ranch is remote, Jennifer stocks up on groceries. "For this reason, I needed to be thoughtful about my pantry," she says. "I found a photo once of a sweet French kitchen with simple café rods and gray curtains hiding the clutter, and I kept it to inspire my future pantry design."



of the ranch life she's always felt drawn to. She kept the backdrop mostly white, with the exception of a few hits of historical blue-gray, so her antiques and one-of-a-kind pieces can shine. "There's nothing fussy here at the ranch," Jennifer says. In fact, she deliberately chose everything—from the raw materials to the furniture—with life's messes in mind. "We have two boys, dogs, farm cats, and a lot of ranch dust that comes in and out of this house on a daily basis," she says. "But I've never been afraid of a little dirt. I embrace all the chips, cracks, and imperfections. To me, that's life. And there's beauty in all of that. It's what gives character to the place you call home." □

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ABOVE Jennifer collects vintage china in classic blue and white—including this Currier and Ives The Old Grist Mill pattern by Royal. She marries her finds with traditional fluted flatware and crisp linens.

OPPOSITE The dining room banquette was designed with plenty of storage underneath for linens. Jennifer had her table made for \$500 by a carpenter she found on Facebook. She added an outdoor stain to make the 5×6-foot table durable. For years, Jennifer eyed the vintage horse painting at a local antiques store before she finally made a low offer of \$89 and brought it home. “It feels like it was always meant to be hanging right there,” she says.





“WE LOVE HISTORY
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—JENNIFER HOROWITZ



ABOVE LEFT A fireplace is a romantic touch in the master bedroom. **ABOVE** A collector of antique books, Jennifer’s favorite room in the house is the library. Two chairs wear traditional nailhead trim and flank an octagonal table the family often uses for games. **LEFT** Jennifer chose neutral bedding for her bed, which is upholstered in linen. “I wanted all shades of tan and white in the master to echo the colors we see outside the windows,” she says. **BELOW** Jennifer found a cast-iron tub wrapped in metal to give her new home a historical feel. For more classic touches, she added wainscoting and ceramic tile that mimics marble for the floors.



THIS PHOTO The bunk room functions as a living area and sleeping space for Preston (shown) and Landen. "I wanted the boys and all their friends to have a place to go and hang out," Jennifer says. She painted the built-ins blue-gray, hung wood paddles on the wall, and chose one theme per bed based on vintage Currier and Ives prints. Each of the bunks is outfitted with its own light, outlet, and USB port.

