



Horse Sense

The menu features a lot more than just oats and hay as empty nesters in Concord find their downsizing solution in a 19th-century carriage house. By Jaci Conry

PHOTOGRAPHS BY JOYELLE WEST FOR THE BOSTON GLOBE

WHEN SALLY SANFORD and her husband, Sandy Smith, decided to downsize, they turned to an elegantly detailed Carpenter Gothic-style carriage house in Concord that Smith's great-grandfather built in the late 1860s.

"We inherited the property in 2007, and it took us several years to decide what to do with it," says Sanford. "It was a complete and utter wreck—almost nothing had been done to it since it was built. But we realized that it was so special we wanted to live in it."

The couple, both in their 60s, got to work creating a home where they could age in place gracefully and that they could pass on to their children.

"It was important that as much of the original structure be preserved as possible, and what we couldn't preserve, we strove to replace in kind," says architect Chip Dewing, principal of Dewing Schmid Kearns Architects & Planners, who collaborated on the conversion with Kochman Reidt + Haigh Cabinetmakers; J.W. Adams Construction was the builder. In the kitchen, examples of this philosophy abound—most intriguingly in the repurposed horse stalls.

"The stalls just captured my imagination, and I thought they should be preserved and transformed as an organizing feature of the kitchen," says Paul Reidt, principal of Kochman Reidt + Haigh. Now

pantry storage, the tall cupboards retain the original curved openings the horses once stuck their heads through to feed. "Each stall had its own window and an ornamental carved floral motif—these were some well-loved horses. Both of those elements remain intact," says Reidt.

Distressed white oak, with knots and saw marks, was selected to replace the withered floors. To contrast with the flooring and add warmth to the space, the cabinetry is cherry that will mellow over time. Open shelves exhibit curved detail that emulates the old horse stalls.

"Sally is an avid cook and baker," says Reidt, "and that was well supported with appliance selections,

which are high-functioning but very subtle in appearance. [The] scale of space for eating and decoration was also something we thought about." He says that a typical 19th-century kitchen would have had a big work table in the middle of the room. To that end, an ample era-appropriate table was made from wood salvaged from the structure by local woodworker Jon Schmalenberger.

The original barn doors—restored, painted red, and fitted with new hardware—now hide the washer and dryer and can close off the kitchen from the foyer. Built-in shelves and cabinets flank the entry to the kitchen. "Those elements were taken from cabinetry that was removed," says Reidt. "Almost all

the details come from the existing condition of the house. We viewed this project as an opportunity to participate in a long story that was getting a new chapter."

"Everywhere my eye goes in the room, I see something I love," says Sanford. "This was never a space intended to be a kitchen. Amazingly, the character of the architecture has been preserved while creating a fantastically functional kitchen." ■

Jaci Conry can be reached at jaci@jaciconry.com. Send comments to magazine@globe.com.

Sandy Smith does prep work as Sally Sanford cooks. Both the Caesarstone counters and subway tile backsplash are gray in tone, pairing well with the stainless steel appliances. Brass drawer pulls and knobs from Restoration Hardware have rustic, barn-worthy appeal.

Opposite page: The original 19th-century horse stalls retain their original form while providing ample room for storage drawers. The stalls were rebuilt using cherry rather than the original pine, which had deteriorated considerably.

