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**DECORATING ESSENTIALS** THE FARMHOUSE RULE BOOK



# ★ THE FARMHOUSE RULE BOOK

*This Massachusetts new-build went from dull to delightful. Use these 10 design rules to infuse your own home with the same timeless style*

SETTING OFF A  
GARAGE IN BARN  
RED GIVES A  
PASTORAL PUNCH.

## **Rule No. 1 KEEP IT CLASSIC**

The brand-new home's exterior borrows from timeless New England architecture, with a Cape Cod-inspired central chimney and petite side porch.





FARMHOUSE  
FAVORITE!  
SUPPLE LEATHER  
FURNITURE  
DEVELOPS A RICH  
PATINA OVER TIME.

Designer Kristina Crestin's clients had a problem. The outside of their newly built home was every bit the modern farmhouse they'd hoped for, right down to the barn-red garage. But inside it felt more buttoned-up traditional than come-as-you-are current. "There was a formality to it that just wasn't right for a young family," says Crestin. "It needed a loosening up for a more comfortable and casual feel." To help the three-bedroom home kick off its boots, so to speak, she turned to time-tested tricks from her designer playbook. "The modern farmhouse movement is really all about landing on the right mix," explains Crestin.

★  
**Rule No. 2**  
**WHEN IN DOUBT, GO ALL-IN**  
**WITH A SINGLE HUE**

The library boasts more traditional millwork than the shiplap and barn wood found elsewhere in the home. Crestin opted to coat every last surface (paneling, built-ins, moldings and the mantel) in the same soothing shade of blue. The cocoon-like effect allows the formality of the space to all but disappear. Also taking the edge off things: a supple leather sofa and mismatched throw pillows.





★  
**Rule No. 3**  
**DECORATE EVERY LAST INCH**

Crestin refuses to equate mudroom with boring. This utilitarian space was shown the same level of design love as the rest of the house, with homey touches such as petite watercolors, an antique runner and a vibrant schoolhouse light. Adding to the charm are shiplap walls and an exterior door painted the same blue-gray as the kitchen cabinets.

“Bold and subdued colors, rustic and industrial elements, new and old finds.” Central to her overhaul was replacing slightly stuffy raised millwork with more down-home takes, such as shiplap and barn wood. “These elements instantly softened the rooms,” says Crestin, who worked with the homeowners to get each space singing a more country tune. Here, a play-by-play guide to how she whipped it into prime farmhouse form.



←  
A SLIDING BARN  
DOOR ADDS  
RUSTIC APPEAL  
AND CONSERVES  
FLOOR SPACE.

★  
**Rule No. 4**  
**MIX HIGH AND LOW BUYS**  
“Part of the home’s relaxed feel comes from the use of both high-end and low-cost finds,” Crestin explains. Take the dining room, where an affordable rag rug and catalog-sourced dining table are displayed right alongside heirloom-worthy Windsor chairs and an original oil painting of the New England landscape.





This house needed a loosening up. The modern farmhouse movement is all about landing a casual mix.



### Rule No. 5 MAKE IT A MATERIAL WORLD

White subway tile? Black granite countertops? Island in a contrasting color? Been there, Pinned that. What helps this kitchen cook up some visual interest is the variety of accent materials, including brass pendant lights, bronze sconces over windows, raw wood open shelving and leather barstools. Adding to the eye-pleasing assortment are the black window sashes, which echo the color of the light fixtures above them.





ORIGINAL  
SCREENS KEEP  
THIS SALVAGED  
FIND FEELING  
AUTHENTIC.

★  
**Rule No. 6**  
SPOTLIGHT SALVAGED FINDS

Rather than sprinkle architectural salvage throughout, Crestin prefers to go big with one or two statement-making pieces. ("You simply get more bang for your buck this way," she explains.) Case in point: the pantry, where she opted for large screen doors that still bear the name of the New England general store from which they came.



★  
**Rule No. 7**

**GO FOR (DISTRESSED) GOLD**  
What helps this gallery wall feel cohesive? The repeated use of distressed gold frames, that's what. The perfectly patinaed accents help a simple ship sketch feel right at home alongside a custom portrait of the homeowners' dog dressed as a soldier. (Yes, you're seeing that right.) The moody gray wall provides a rich backdrop for the artful arrangement.

“Part of the home's relaxed feel is the use of both high-end and low-cost finds.”





## Rule No. 8

### BRING ON THE TEXTURE

The home's color palette takes an extra-cozy turn in the master bedroom. Here, textured elements, such as nubby linen curtains and a hand-stitched quilt, infuse the space with tactile style. Anchoring the comfy look is a sprawling wool rug that adds warm salmon tones underfoot.



## Rule No. 9

### ADD A TOUCH OF WHIMSY

Bathroom standard-bearers (honeycomb floor tiles, subway tile wainscoting) are front and center in the hall bath. But what makes this space shine are sweet accents, including the birch step stool, petite trough sink and a trio of animal prints. The latter are as affordable as they are charming: Crestin purchased them as a digital download through Etsy and hung them in off-the-shelf barnwood frames.

FARMHOUSE FAVORITE!  
A TROUGH SINK  
HARKS BACK TO  
FARMHOUSES'  
SLEEP-A-CROWD  
ROOTS.



## Rule No. 10

### LATHER. RINSE. REPEAT MATERIALS

"Because they are relatively small, bathrooms are a great place to repeat eye-catching materials," explains Crestin, who designed chunky candle sconces using the same reclaimed barnwood found on the home's dining room door and powder room ceiling. Also on repeat: the marble countertops, blue cabinetry and white subway tile from the kitchen.

