

# NEW YORK SPACES

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DUPLEX  
LOFT  
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STYLE

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BUSTIC  
BARN

TREND  
REPORT:  
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# barn DANCE

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With a dose of color and whimsy, John Barman  
reinvigorates a 19th-century barn near Roxbury, Connecticut



**modern BARN style**


A pair of industrial French lamps from the 1950s inspired the house's retro mid-century decorative scheme, chairs and footstools by Steve Wigant, walnut armchairs with backs of strong leather cord, and custom side and a custom rug insert playfully with the barn's heavy beams.





#### SEATS AFLENTY

**(above)** A custom sofa introduces bold shades of red, yellow, and orange that are picked up in a chair by Piero Piretti and ottomans by Karin Rubin and Denis Santachia. A shabby vintage walnut table and photographs by Eric Zener complete the space. **(left)** Restored floors honestly reveal in black-and-white checkered tile and open shelving made of reclaimed barn siding help a modern kitchen relate to the rest of the house. The glow from vintage pendant lamps now reflects off a soapstone-topped island framed by contemporary bar stools with a mid-century attitude. **(opposite)** Barman secured a long wood picnic table with natural edges and woven-leather chairs from John Rosselli & Associates for the dining room. The pendant lamp is vintage.



A PAIR OF INDUSTRIAL FRENCH LAMPS FROM THE 1950S INSPIRED  
THE HOUSE'S ENTIRE MID-CENTURY DECORATIVE SCHEME



WHEN A YOUNG, VIBRANT FAMILY WHOSE NEW YORK APARTMENT designer John Barman had decorated showed him the converted barn in rural Connecticut they recently purchased, Barman knew immediately what style would suit it—and then—perfectly: Modern Barn. The clients seemed receptive to his pronouncement, but when they asked him to define that vision, he confessed, “I couldn’t. I knew it was right, but I had no idea what that really meant.”

A shopping trip to find objects that would embody his concept happily yielded a pair of industrial French pendant lamps from the 1950s that inspired the house’s entire scheme and palette. Their circular, mid-century form and bright orange color inject a little levity into the heavily beamed and otherwise dark double-height living room, and the flakes of rust that speckle their metal shades reminded them all nostalgically of farm equipment. “That’s Modern Barn,” Barman affirms.

The clients, whose primary home is designed in sophisticated 1940s Art Deco, wanted their country residence to be fun above all. Barman took that as a cue to adapt their love of bold contemporary art, modern furniture, and admiration for unusual, artistic things to the rustic space and run with it. To “push back” against the literal and figurative weightiness of the living room’s strongly rectilinear beams, stone fireplace, and wood-plank floors, he painted all the walls white and

continued adding accessories with rounded forms and lively colors, such as a custom rug with marini olive-shaped motifs in orange, red, yellow and green; ceramic lamps with plenty of character and tall brass shades; and an outdoor ottoman placed for friends to chat.

Mid-century furniture and cues define the rest of the 10,000-square-foot house as well. Vintage lamps illuminate every room, and upholstered pieces by Paul McCobb, Pierre Paulin, and Hans Wegner keep the hip-and-playful mood constant from space to space. The term “retrofitting” takes on an ironic twist when used to describe actions that helped the ’60s vibe take over the formerly “kitchy kitchen.” Cupboards depicting farm animals, for example, were replaced with open shelving made from reclaimed barn boards. The result is a country house like no other in the Northeast—by restraining themselves from going with the expected, this family freed itself up to live without restraint. — *By Lauren*

#### with the GRAIN

Furniture in the master bedroom is arranged to take advantage of views out to the countryside beyond. A chaise longue by Christian Lacroix receives a round sculptural mirror as a foil, and the bed’s headboard retains its natural edge. A French chandelier from the 1940s with a twig-like form hangs above.



### the ART of reception

**DESIGN:** One living room corner sports a vintage mahogany game table and chairs with orange cushions that draw the eye to a painting by Roger Brown. **OPPOSITE PAGE, CLOCKWISE FROM TOP LEFT:** A modern porch of a stone blazes the barn's original function. The master suite's sitting room has comfortable reading chairs, notably one by Paul McCobb. Flanking a red-painted vintage light are Kelly Graham's striped composition, left, and Rubin Torres Llorca's figurative one, right. The father takes reading and ping pong seriously, so the top floor of an 1880s farmhouse adjacent to the main barn becomes a game room with empire shelves and a sleeping loft for guests.









#### SPACE shapers

The second floor of the house's original site was given extra windows and converted into a private study. A custom built curved sofa along the circular wall and is flanked by an oval table and modern table from the 1950s. The desk originally sat in the United Nations headquarters.