

In the foyer, flea market finds and farmhouse wallpaper create a charming vignette. "These are vintage theater chairs," homeowner Holly Thompson says. "We have three kids, and this is where they can sit and put their shoes on before going outside." The other pieces are thrifted finds too: the wallpaper is from Goodwill, and the other accessories such as the rug, basket and quilts are from estate sales.

Midcentury Farmhouse

This home in Franklin, Tennessee shows off classic farmhouse style with midcentury touches.

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The far wall in the dining room needed some extra spice, so Holly added two pieces that gave the room warmth and height. "I added the window frame on the far wall to add to the overall atmosphere," she says. "The credenza is a midcentury piece." The warm wood works well with the fall vignette and will also serve as a practical work space for serving Thanksgiving dinner.

Unremarkable. Not the word you'd expect to describe a home in *American Farmhouse Style*. But from the outside, the home of Dave and Holly Thompson in Franklin, Tennessee is, well, unremarkable. It's a well-kept brick home in a subdivision full of well-kept brick homes. If you drove by, there would be little reason to notice the structure. But just wait until you step inside. The magic of Holly's balanced design pulls you into a space that is the perfect mix of farmhouse style with a touch of midcentury charm—two styles you don't often see in the same sentence.

Don't be afraid to incorporate materials as décor. Use a stack of wood as a vignette, or collect old architectural pieces to use as shelving and bookends.



DIY UPGRADES

When your home is a cookie-cutter tract house, what can you do to make it unique? Holly, who is a designer, and Dave, a real estate agent, decided to add architectural features, such as in the formal dining room. "This room was originally builder-grade, which is basically just a box with drywall," Holly says. "Once we put the table in, there was just a lot of wood and drywall and no character." This wouldn't do, so the couple got to work. "I added the mantel with the chalkboard inside, like a faux fireplace," she says.

For many of their DIY upgrades, Holly has used her secret weapon: her husband. While it's Holly's vision that's stamped indelibly on every room in the house, Dave's skill as a builder and renovator has given it life. You can see this in the mantel and bookshelves framing the fireplace in the living room. "We took out the '80s mantel that was here, and Dave actually constructed this mantel by cutting down a bigger one we found," Holly says. "The bookshelves used to be honey oak. We painted them and replaced the original 1990 pulls on the cabinets."

In the kitchen, the couple added to the layout with a DIY island that also serves as their everyday kitchen table. "We happened to find this counter [constructed] as a table," Holly says. "Dave cut the legs off, and we found the two cabinets underneath. One of the cabinets is actually a spice rack, and Dave just put it all together so the metal top would fit over everything." The addition makes the layout flow well, because the surface functions as both a work and eating space.

In the living room, comfortable leather seating offsets the white built-in cabinets and exposed-brick mantel that Dave constructed himself. Small autumn touches, such as a fall-leaf banner and pumpkins on the coffee table, help the room feel seasonal.



The formal dining room was originally an empty box, but Holly and Dave added character by installing their own faux fireplace, topped by a vintage mantel. "The mantel is from the 1940s," Holly says. The addition makes the room look custom, and a hand-drawn fire adds DIY charm to the space.



One unique touch in the dining room is the array of vases on the table that Holly uses to create a one-of-a-kind centerpiece. "I have a collection of milk glass from different flea markets," she says. "Because I'm able to put one flower in each vase, I could create a much larger centerpiece without having to spend a bunch of money on a huge floral arrangement."



2 RULES TO THE PERFECT FALL CENTERPIECE

Ready for fall entertaining? Follow these two fool-proof steps to create your centerpiece.

- 1. Start with a single piece.** This might be a burlap table runner you love, a vase of beautiful fall florals or even a collection of bud vases. Use this starting point as your inspiration and build off of it—literally. Place the item on your table and build around, on top of and between it.
- 2. Layer.** The ultimate rule of a good centerpiece is to layer—textures, colors and heights. If you're starting with a large vase of flowers, layer in smaller, shorter pieces around it such as tea candles, baby pumpkins and a table runner. Add multiple kinds of items visually, so the centerpiece remains interesting.

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Holly and Dave's DIY island was a cost-effective, yet entirely transformational, use of space and thrifted finds. "We did the kitchen on a very small budget," Holly says. "Countertops are usually hard to get used." The table-turned island worked perfectly.



LEFT: An eye-catching detail in the kitchen is the stove hood made from wood. "Holly came up with the idea of cladding the hood in pallet wood," Dave says. "And I just had to find a way to make it work." Paired with the pale tile backsplash, the overall effect is one of depth and texture.



RIGHT: The spectacular mercantile wall in the kitchen is a Holly Thompson original. "The original kitchen only had cabinets on that wall," Holly says. "When we built the island, there wasn't enough space to put cabinets there, so I looked for a piece that would act like cabinets and a countertop. This is narrower than cabinets or a full-sized counter so you can still walk on the other side of the island."



Use your thrifted finds as functional pieces whenever you can—this will save you money on new pieces and allow you to add personalized charm to your home.

In the craft room, Holly uses flea market finds as functional furniture and storage. "The file cabinet and the locker are both midcentury pieces," she says. "I use them for craft storage."



Next to the living room is the sitting room that Holly has turned into her farmhouse-friendly sewing and craft room. "This is the same three-dollars-a-roll wallpaper that I used in the entry," she says. "I love the fact that it's patterned, but the colors are all neutral."

DIY WALL RULER

WHAT YOU'LL NEED:

- Wood board, 6 or 8 inches x 6 1/2 feet
- Sand paper
- Wood stain of choice
- Number stencils or printed number outlines
- Pencil
- Ruler
- Black acrylic paint or paint pen

WHAT YOU'LL DO:

1. Sand and stain the board to your desired smoothness and color. If you want the board to have a worn look, sand it a bit after staining.
2. Decide how high you want to hang the ruler. This will help you decide where to start your marks. For example, if you want to hang it 6 inches from the ground, your first mark will be for inch 7.
3. Using a ruler, mark the board every inch with a pencil. Starting at inch 12, mark every 6 inches thicker and longer.
4. Go back over the pencil marks with a paint pen or thin black acrylic paint line.
5. Next to the first longer mark (inch 12), tape the #1 stencil in place or trace the outline with a pencil. Paint in the number 1 with the black paint, which will represent foot 1. Repeat this for every other larger mark to indicate the feet.
6. Hang and enjoy!

STYLE MASHUP

Holly doesn't limit herself to just one style while she's shopping at estate sales. Her home is predominately farmhouse, but she also incorporates unique midcentury pieces into the various rooms. "I really like midcentury, and I really like farmhouse that is done in an authentic way," she says. "I think that if you get authentic pieces, not reproductions, a lot of them can work together." For example, just off the living room is Holly's craft room. The style here features her unique mashup of farmhouse and midcentury styles, as well as her love of a bargain. "I use the drawers and the cubbies for craft storage," Holly says. "The dresser here is rustic and very much farmhouse, but the chair in front is midcentury." By allowing a few midcentury pieces to enter her farmhouse sanctuary, Holly has created a unique style all her own.

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COLLECTING PIECES

From the moment you enter the house and encounter the vintage theater seats in the foyer, to the door wall in the master bedroom, Holly's vintage collections shine. She's gathered the pieces over time from various local sources, always with a keen eye for both style and a bargain. "I love vintage things, and I love real things, so most of the accessories you see are the real item," she says. "They are not expensive if you shop estate sales; you just have to hunt. I prefer that to buying pretend farmhouse stuff from a store that sells reproductions."

Besides large furniture pieces, Holly also has vignettes with smaller collectibles throughout the house. In the kitchen, a set of brown transferware acts as hanging art. "The brown plates are all different finds at flea markets," she says. "I love brown transferware and have been collecting for a long time." The dining room table has a centerpiece made of vintage milk glass vases, and various vintage quilts make appearances throughout the house.

The Thompsons' home is a direct reflection of Holly's style as a decorator. For her, it's all about authenticity, in the pieces she buys and the carefully-selected accessories she uses. Midcentury farmhouse—remarkable.

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In the master bathroom, a freestanding tub with brass accents serves the dual purpose of bath and shower without losing any farmhouse charm. Distressed elements like the mood mirror and floors bring the rustic feel to the bathroom, while the brass fixtures mix in the sleek feel of midcentury.



In the powder room downstairs, Holly chose to go with an industrial look between the dark walls, black subway tile and repurposed cement trough, which she and Dave turned into the bathroom sink.



Entering the master bedroom, you are greeted first by Lucy the cat, and then by a patchwork of real wooden doors turned horizontally and covering one wall. "I call it the door wall," Holly says. "I wanted to do some kind of wall treatment, but I wanted to avoid cliché. This is my take on expensive wood paneling but using doors."

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The master bath is a dazzling mix of tile, brass and chrome, all held together with an old-fashioned trunk. "What happened here was that we found the gray tile, first [at a reuse material store]," Holly says. "It is very expensive Italian tile, and they only had a few boxes. Then we found these strips of Onyx and Marble for the floor. We had enough of the gray tile to do half the wall."

If you find a material you love but have a limited supply, use it anyway. This gray subway tile covers half the wall, but still makes a statement.