

GREENER ACRES

One designer builds her family the ultimate agrarian escape, where craftsmanship reigns supreme.

FAMILY ROOM
“The concept was laid-back living, inspired by the great outdoors,” Allison Willson says.
Paint: Shaded White, Farrow & Ball. **Drapery:** custom, in Tonic Living linen. **Sofa:** Montauk Sofa, in Studio Four NYC fabric. **Armchairs:** custom, Silva Custom Furniture.

interior designer Allison Willson Design
writer Kathryn O’Shea-Evans / photographer Patrick Biller



MUDROOM

"Everything's tumbled, everything's chipped,....so you can really just feel relaxed," Willson says. She sourced the reclaimed **cobblestones** for the floor from [Eco Out-door](#). **Ceiling light:** vintage, [Victorian Revival](#). **Table:** [Schwung](#). **Knobs:** [Ashley Norton](#).

FOR ANY URBANITE WHO'S HAD late-night Zillow fantasies about chucking it all and moving to a farm in the country, Toronto-based designer Allison Willson is proof it's possible. "My husband and I had been searching for some property to build a farmhouse on for years," Willson says. Their patient research paid off when they discovered a 50-acre parcel less than two hours from their home in Toronto that was essentially untouched. "There was a little old German man who had horses there, and he built a barn out of railway ties that used to run through the land."

On this fairy-tale ground, Willson and her husband plopped an Airstream trailer to live in with their two kids while they designed their dream home. "We spent time getting to know where the sun is in the winter versus the summer and what happens with the wind at the place we wanted to build," she recalls. "We found some ponds, cut some trails, and made it this beautiful place."

They worked closely with their architect, the late James Pearson, to design a farmhouse that would take in all the

lushness in a way that suited the native scenery. Pearson's existing plan was long and linear, and Willson pushed for something that would feel "a little bit more intimate and cozy, even though the scale was similar," she says. "I took that long line and chopped it up and turned it into a U, so the house turns back on itself."

One of the family's favorite spaces to gather is the kitchen, where solid oak beams, vintage pendant lanterns from Jardin de France, and white oak cabinetry add to the storybook feel. The rubble-finished limestone walls, in particular, assist in making the new construction feel centuries-old. "Our architect liked to take one part of a house and make it a question mark: 'Oh, is this an original old stone home?'" Willson says.

To continue that storied feel, Willson chose real stone, instead of veneer, which meant extra legwork. "Since it's chunky and heavy, it needed to be built in at the architectural stage and factored into the foundation. **We had our kitchen archways and window walls built out 12 to 16 inches thick, so that when you're in the kitchen, you're surrounded by these incredibly deep walls.** And it does give a feeling like, *Okay, this room has been here forever.*" ■



FAMILY ROOM

Willson doesn't love big rooms: "My approach was to cozy it in." Her brother, a mason at [Strongback Contracting](#), detailed the fireplace with antique brick from [François & Co.](#) **Chandelier:** [Wish Designs](#). **Shearling armchair:** [Crate & Barrel](#) (foreground).



KITCHEN

Honed Arabescato marble counters bring a softness to the cook space, because “it’s so texturally interesting,” Willson says. **Faucets** and **pot filler:** [Waterworks](#).

PANTRY

A large, south-facing window allowed Willson to paint the walls in a darker color, Down Pipe by [Farrow & Ball](#). **Cabinetry:** [Against the Grain](#). **Pendant:** vintage, [Big Ship Salvage](#).



KITCHEN

The countertop has a different profile on the island—a double bullnose. **Wallcovering:** [Kravet](#) (ceiling). **Counter stools:** [Shoppe Amber Interiors](#). **Hardware:** [Upper Canada Specialty Hardware](#).

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THIS CLOSED
PANTRY
HIDES SMALL
APPLIANCES.



GIRL'S ROOM

"I wanted this space to feel vibrant but calm for my one-year-old," Willson says. She DIYed the ottoman with [Len's Mill Store](#) bullion fringe trim. **Crib:** [Stokke](#). **Suzani:** vintage, [Round Top Antiques Fair](#). **Ceiling light:** [Pinch](#).



DINING ROOM

Willson says the deep arch helps the space "feel like an old, original stone structure." Vintage **pendants** from [Victorian Revival](#) add warmth. **Sconces:** [Obsolete](#). **Dining table** and **chairs:** vintage.



POWDER ROOM

The [Primavera Home](#) wallcovering is "a printed, woven grasscloth, kind of like a textile," Willson says. **Sconces:** [Apparatus](#). **Faucet:** [Waterworks](#). **Vanity:** [Against the Grain](#). **Knobs:** [Lee Valley](#).

BOY'S ROOM

"I left him space to add his own things over time," Willson says of her son's room. **Paint:** White Dove, [Benjamin Moore](#). **Pendants:** [Palecek](#) (bedside). **Side tables:** custom, [Cabinet](#). **Bed:** custom, in [Peter Dunham Textiles](#) fabric.





PRIMARY BEDROOM
Doors by the fireplace offer a view of Georgian Bay that's best enjoyed from the cozy bed. **Sconces:** [Obsolete](#). **Coffee table:** [Prize Home + Garden](#). **Armchairs:** [Montauk](#). **Rug:** [Allan Rug](#).

PRIMARY BATHROOM
Willson loves the [Barry Dixon mural](#) that frames the entryway, saying, "There are little farm animals on it, and it feels like it belongs up there." **Ceiling light:** [Residential Lighting](#). **Tub:** [Drummonds](#).



"The views help deliver that outdoor-feeling vibe."