

# MODERN farmhouse style™

**10**  
FARMHOUSE  
KITCHENS  
WE LOVE

*Dress Up a*  
Neutral Color  
Palette

**TIPS FOR USING  
SALVAGED WOOD**

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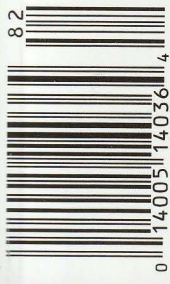
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# pretty *tough*

*A pioneering woman  
rustles up a tough-as-  
nails weekend getaway  
for her outdoorsy  
family and friends.*







*opposite and this photo:* It's hard to imagine a living room in Texas cattle country without a leather chair. Designer Kathryn LeMaster gave a nod to that custom with leather butterfly chairs. Their lightweight frames are easily rearranged to accommodate extra seating or face the view of rolling hills and a pond outside. The sofa's indoor-outdoor upholstery stands up to fishermen and grandchildren alike.

## farm made modern

lesson  
number

11

For a clean, bright wall color, choose a white paint with a touch of warmth or no undertones at all. Stay away from cool ones—they can feel dingy.





*this photo:* With guests in mind, Natalie McGehee skipped upper cabinets in favor of open shelves stocked with essentials. A reclaimed wood island contrasts the stain-grade poplar lower cabinets. The dining area separates the kitchen from the living room, a design intended for flexibility: Dining chairs easily move for extra seating, and the table's casters allow it to roll.





## There's DIY, and then there's Natalie McGehee. After buying raw

pasture land outside College Station, Texas, the Houston engineer hopped on the "19-something" tractor that came with the property and cleared a spot for a weekend home herself. "It's backbreaking labor," she says, but she wasn't daunted. "I enjoy projects—putting my hands on things."

So she was all in when it came to designing an unfussy getaway where she and her husband, Doug, could welcome family, friends, hunters, and fishermen. "I wanted a gathering place for my family for football weekends and birthdays," Natalie says, "but it had to be tough."

The farms around her suggested the perfect solution: a pre-engineered metal barn with a corrugated shed roof, the type that is ubiquitous in rural communities. Architect Mark Wellen customized the small building (only 1,069 square feet) to include a wide-open living space bookended by a master bedroom and a bunk room, three walls of sliding glass doors, and a deep porch and dogtrot to connect the home to the garage.

Regarding the inside, Natalie was firm: No drywall or delicate finishes. "I didn't want to worry about nicks on the walls and things getting broken," she says. An unstained concrete floor and shiplap walls delivered on durability and left Natalie with a modern industrial canvas to fill.

For help, Natalie called a family friend, designer Kathryn LeMaster. "Natalie has an incredible eye," LeMaster says. "I simply helped translate it for her and took the stress out of it."

The duo quickly realized the power of repeating the home's materials in the furnishings, contrasting them to get the minimal and warm aesthetic Natalie wanted. After that, the decisions fell like dominoes: White paint for the walls, reclaimed wood for the kitchen island, sliding barn doors in the living room, a linen look-alike fabric on the sofa with leather butterfly chairs nearby, and an iron bed next to a dresser Natalie painted herself.

"If I could change anything, it would be more sleeping space," Natalie says. "We really are 'the more the merrier' kind of people." She's already picked out the site for a sleeping cabin, and the tractor is waiting for her.

*For resources, see page 96.*

**above:** Natalie started this project knowing the walls would be shiplap. "I didn't want to worry about drywall getting scuffed or someone putting a hole in it," she says. The long horizontal planks might be having a design moment now, but she isn't worried. "They've been around for centuries. They're timeless," she says. One of the barn doors—made with wood from a shed that used to house an old Model T Ford—leads to the bunk room.



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## welcome home

Natalie McGehee's guest-first mindset dictated a lot of this home's design. Here's how she made the house user-friendly:

**ADJUSTABLE SEATING.** *You never know where a big group will gather. Thankfully, every seat but the sofa is lightweight and easily portable. Barstools that raise and lower with a spin of the seat accommodate kids and grown-ups alike.*

**OPEN STORAGE.** *Guests never have to search for a cereal bowl in the morning thanks to the kitchen's open shelves. The same principle reigns in the pantry and in the bathrooms, where metro shelving and open vanities store necessities in plain sight.*

**EXTRA ENTERTAINING SPACE.** *Sliding glass doors allow the garage to morph into an airy gathering space for a crowd.*

**SHOWER FOR ALL AGES.** *Long before her grandson was in the picture, McGehee installed a handheld sprayer in the hardworking bathroom off the bunk room so visitors with children could easily clean up.*

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*this page:* The master bed had LeMaster and Natalie stumped until they remembered their rule about contrasting materials. Then it became obvious: The room needed metal. Luckily, they found an iron bed frame in a pared-down take on a traditional silhouette. The duo spray-painted the faux-horn lamp bases white and topped them with linen drum shades.









*above left:* The reclaimed wood theme found its way into the guest bath, in the form of look-a-like ceramic tiles on the walls. *above right:* Natalie sourced unfinished bunk beds from a company that allowed her to specify the measurements. Both the length and the height between the lower and upper bunks got extra inches, and she added plush mattresses to make them comfortable for adults. *below:* "It's not so different from taking a 200-year-old Amish barn and converting it to a house," architect Mark Wellen says of the McGehee home. He used a 360-degree porch with an overhang to create an outdoor living space and protect the home from the relentless Texas sun. Sliding glass doors net the same sunny, open look as glass walls at less cost.

