



# Barnyard “BLISS”

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PHOTOGRAPHY BY : : JIMMY CHIARELLA

**MY HUSBAND'S FAMILY** hails from New Hampshire. In fact, they live on a 200-plus year old farmstead passed on from the original Gage family. The attached barn with its massive stone hearth once housed the family carriage, the sort pulled by horses, and just behind it stands the old horse stalls where the family's last remaining horse now resides. That barn is magical...filled with treasures, and memories stored up in its walls. There are barns like it all over New England—many of them are still hard working, some are half tumbling down with the odd chicken dashing in and out, and on occasion you'll even run across one that's been converted into a home. Maybe still hard worn in appearance from the outside, but catch a glimpse inside and you may see a modern iron staircase leading to a loft above, or someone seated by lamplight in the living area reading a good book.

But I live in Tennessee and barns aren't usually quite so old. There aren't so many companies who specialize in the business of taking down old barns only to resurrect them on different land because the particular barn is held in unusually high historic esteem and should never be discarded. And you certainly don't see many barns or stables turned into gorgeous homes. So when I got the call about just such a barn in Lenoir City, I was on board before I'd even seen it. Down Hines Valley Road, a short distance from Eaton's Crossroads, is Duff Turner Estates, simply

known as The Old Duff Farm established in the early 1900's. Five years ago, the property was purchased by Jeff Vanhooze, whose motivation to relocate from Farragut was his youngest daughter Haley, who is 11 and an experienced equestrian. Jeff and wife Patricia intended to build an 8,000 sq. ft. family home made of logs and stacked stone. The dilapidated barn and stalls on the property would likely be torn down and replaced with a “show barn” for Haley's horses. But as the economy hit a downward spiral, Jeff and Patricia began to re-think their plans as well as their priorities. Did they really need such a large home? And what would such a home be worth should they ever attempt to sell in today's economy? The old barn was quite charming with its 45-foot long, hand-hewn chestnut beams (rare now in this area, and aged some 200 years). It sparked an idea and fulfilled a long-held dream. “We decided to convert the old barn into a 3-bedroom home,” says Jeff. But this was to be no ordinary barn conversion (if there is such a thing); the VanHooze's wanted character galore. Helping to achieve this was the use of beautiful Alder wood, pitted with age, complete with worm holes, as well as stacked stone and hand-hammered wrought iron throughout the home and stables.

Jeff didn't utilize the services of an architect for the conversion of the home or the stalls, which remain under the same roof as the family home. “We planned it all in our

heads," says Jeff. "We had fun planning it all. We sort of designed as we went, with no formal drawings. Some ideas stemmed from looking at magazines. We'd say "it'd be nice to do this or that." Jeff, who pegs himself a general contractor, among other things (his main business is concrete construction) worked primarily with two men whom he paid an hourly wage to convert the old barn into what he calls the Barn House. "We kept it pretty simple," he laughs. "And if something didn't look right, we'd pull it out and start over!" Butler Tipton, who has been featured on Bill Landry's Heartland series for rebuilding the Historical Fort Loudon site in Vonore, Tennessee installed the stacked stone—miles of it, it seems, and with miles of impact to boot.

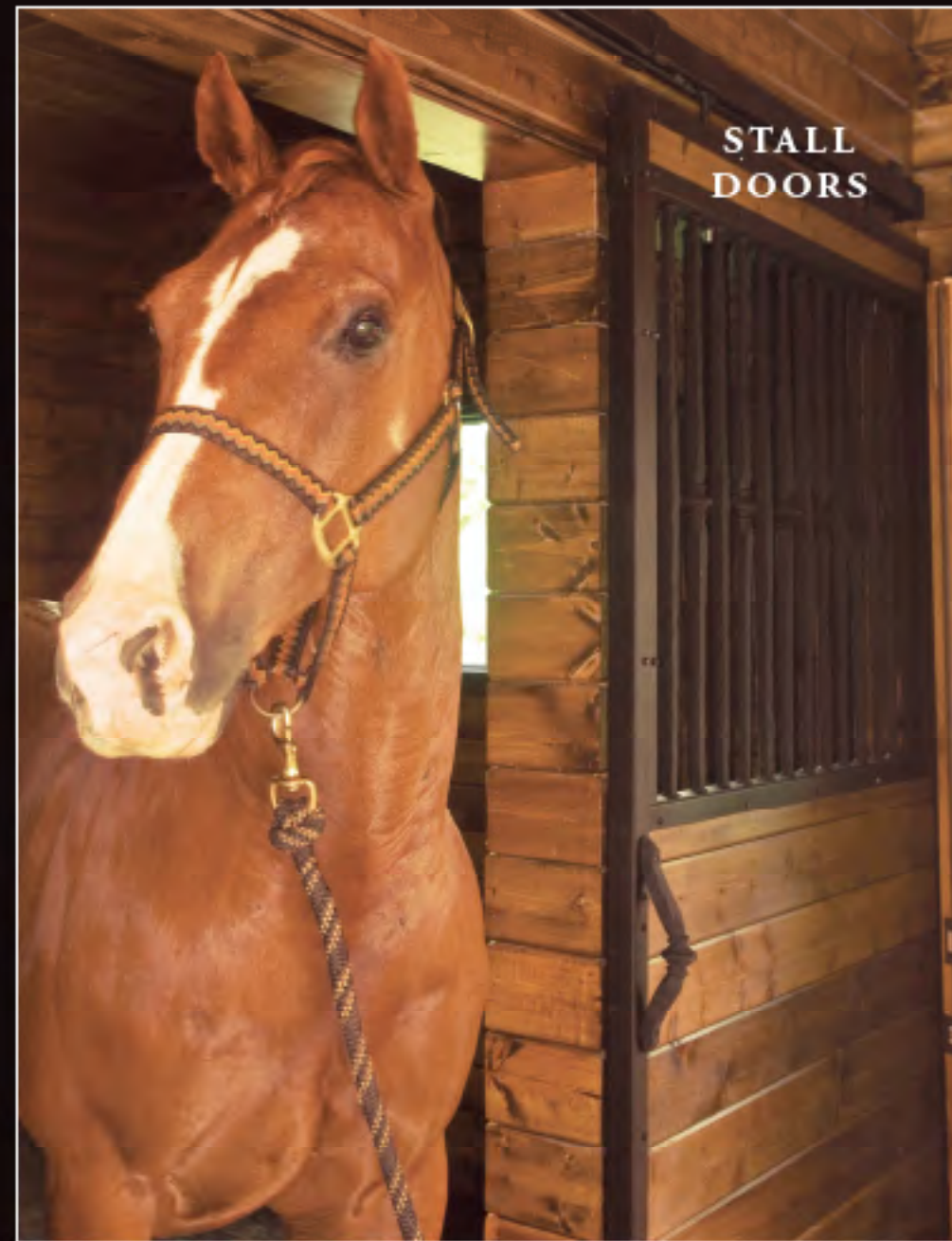
#### COOKING UP SOMETHING WONDERFUL

Jeff proclaims his wife "a real gourmet cook," and he takes full advantage! The couple installed a wood-fired pizza oven from Earth Stone Ovens out of California, in their kitchen,

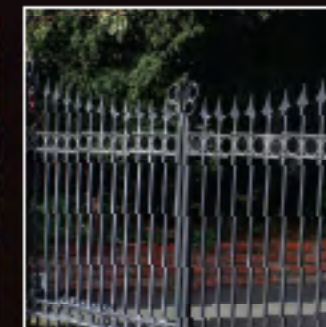
and they use it frequently. Family favorites are chicken wings and, of course, wood fired pizza. The hearth beneath the oven adds warmth and charm to the space. (There are additional hearths in the living room, as well as in the master suite.) The kitchen is bright and open; the adjoining dining area is bathed in natural light from the wall-to-wall windows on two sides of the room. Stacked stone columns punctuate stone walls that rise to just beneath the windows, and the opposite wall is made of the barn's original notched hand-hewn Chestnut logs with chinking above the stone. The ceiling is tongue and groove, finished in a beautiful pecan stain. The ultimate touch? A bird's nest they found on the property made mostly of horse hair was gently placed into a knot in the old wood. The gorgeous stone work and ceiling carry over into the kitchen, with the same pecan

finish on the hand-crafted cabinetry from Wildwood Cabinets. Smokey Mountain Tops fitted the counters with wheat colored Granite (called Copper Canyon) imported from Africa and hand-picked from Triton Stone. This stone was also used in the home's 5 bathrooms and on counters in the living area—300 sq. feet in all. Outfitting the kitchen with professional grade appliances was especially important to Patricia who began cooking with her grandmother in Miami at the tender age of 9 and has been at it ever since. The double-oven/six-burner range is Dacor that fits right into the cabinetry. Below is a warming drawer concealed with knotty Adler wood to match the Bosch dishwasher and Sub Zero refrigerator that are also hidden from view.

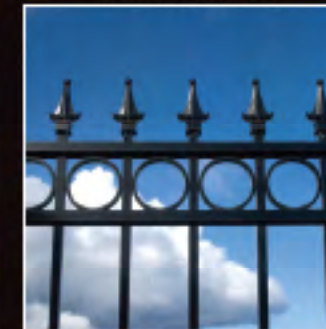
## The Natural Beauty of Wrought Iron



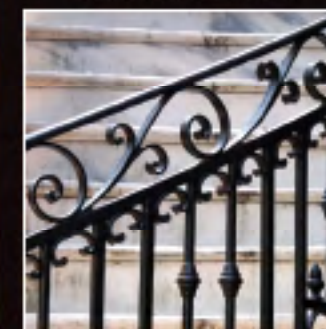
### GATES



### FENCES



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### EASY ELEGANCE

Patricia also did all of the decorating, painting the walls in warm earthy tones set off beautifully by the knotty Alder wood baseboards, trim, pocket doors and cabinetry throughout. Jeff adds, "We love elegant things—we sort of steer clear of trendy things and knick-knacks. We want the things we bring into our home to stay in style for years to come."

The lighting throughout the home is from American Lighting as well as Jones & Lee (now Mayer Electric Supply Co. Inc.) "Patricia picked everything out; she has an eye for elegance," he says. Supple leather covers many of the furnishings and the warmth of the walls is complimented by richly colored, oriental rugs and draperies. The living area features an unusual built-in stone "sideboard" flanked by stone columns topped with gas lanterns (there are 21 matching lanterns set on exterior columns around the home). A rustic stairwell, which an architect helped to design, is made of ruff-hewn beams and logs. It leads to a catwalk above the living area and makes a dramatic statement.

Haley's suite is also upstairs; her bedroom overlooks the pond and horse pasture. "She has the best view in the house," says Jeff. Haley chose a king-sized bed, a cow-hair rug along with a saddle stand for her room, but what she loves most are the remote-controlled ceiling fan and lights! There is also a craft room and a gym on this floor.

The couple's master suite leads to a porch with stacked stone columns and steps, with railings of hand-hammered wrought-iron by Chase Disney of Disney-Reed Ornamental.

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### HORSE PLAY

The VanHoose property is a haven for the horses they share their home with. The beautiful landscaping was done by Stuart Row Landscapes, Inc. “They brought in 36,000 sq. ft. of sod,” Jeff told me, “and all of the mulch for a path that leads from the barn to the pasture.” Hickory Hardscapes installed the driveway pavers for two driveways—one

mule instead.” When Jeff rode out in the golf cart on Christmas, he yelled “run Forrest run!” because they had recently watched the movie Forrest Gump together. But by this time, Haley had her heart set on an actual mule! Soon after, they purchased one, who she promptly named Forrest. They are now in the process of building a horse arena. The proud father beams, “Haley is serious about her riding, and she does really well at it.” She shows and wins often, with many Championship wins to her credit. “She’s only been riding for three years—she is a natural,” Jeff continues.

Enter the horse stalls and you’ll wonder if maybe there’s room for you. All have elaborate, stacked stone columns and tongue and groove material (imported from England) on the walls and ceilings. Each is outfitted with air conditioning and heating plus a fly spray system is installed in the ceiling to mist each stall and the gleaming stained concrete hallway that leads to the 5 stalls. From the hallway ceiling hang two elegant chandeliers—I did say this was no ordinary barn-to-house conversion! There is also a feed room, a tack room and a bath, all built from the beautiful, knotty Alder wood found throughout. The stalls are separated from the house by an

Every other picket on the railing is accented by an iron globe. Disney is also responsible for helping to design the windows in the barn. Their cozy nest is made all the more charming by the home’s tin roof. Jeff smiles and tells me, “The rain sounds really good on it. It wakes us up sometimes, but we love it.” The exterior covered porch below is as inviting as it is beautiful. As ceiling fans generate a cool breeze, comfortable seating beckons and the view of the rolling green fields and blue skies beyond is nothing short of breath-taking.

that leads to the house and another leading to the barn. The grounds are lush and green, the sort that makes me want to kick off my shoes and run across it...and then perhaps take a dip in the pond where the three horses and one mule take the occasional drink. Yes, it’s true, there’s a mule in the mix with the beautiful quarter horses. “There’s a story behind that,” laughs Jeff. When Haley was eight we planned to give her a golf cart for Christmas to tool around the property in. But we jokingly told her she was getting an actual

exterior wall featuring striking horizontal windows with glass-paned doors. Often these windows frame the face of a horse getting a breath of fresh air—a fun sight to see a horse peering from the window of what looks to be a family residence! “We paid a pretty penny for those windows, but they really do add so much to the look of the house.” Wildfire, Mr. Miami, Sir Max and, of course, Forest know they’ve got it good! But to lessen the risk of being outdone by the horses, Jeff has his own enclave—a well-appointed Billiards Room. With heavy stone bar tops, stone columns and gas lanterns, the room has the sort of moody ambience meant for cocktails and billiards.

### FROM DRILLING TO FILLING

As a young man, Jeff left Dixie Lee Junction, where he was raised, and went to work in an oil field in Texas. Later, he started pouring manholes along with other concrete structures and did well for himself. In 1996, he married Patricia and together, along with her two daughters, then aged 6 and 7 they headed back to Tennessee. Once they got here, he put his concrete knowledge to the test and formed Pour in Place Inc., a company he still owns that specializes in commercial concrete construction. He started yet another company in 1998 called East Tennessee Pre-Cast which he sold in August of 2007, but his eldest daughter is still employed there as an Engineer.



Today, Jeff’s business, VanHooseco, LLC, has two divisions: Vanhooseco Ready Mix and VanHooseco Pre-Cast, which specializes in producing ready-mix concrete and pre-cast concrete walls. The process is unique: the first precast wall is a system of columns and panels made to imitate Tennessee stacked stone—and his is the only company of its kind in Tennessee. These walls have an amazing versatility because they can be used for perimeter fencing, earth retaining, and building walls—all having the look of real stone. The second precast wall is the “L” wall, which is an L-shaped gravity wall. Once delivered to a jobsite, it can be quickly set in place eliminating a costly cast-in-place wall.

### FINISHING TOUCHES

After working about a year and a half to complete the house and its landscaping, the family is loving life. “This may not have been the way we planned it originally, but this is truly our dream house now. You have to see this place to truly appreciate it,” Jeff says. And if you should ever be so fortunate, you’ll know exactly what he means. ✕

# The Beauty of Precast

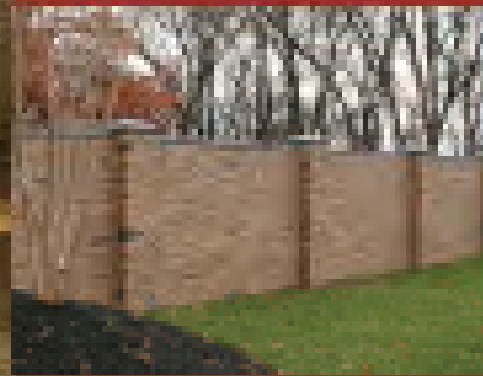


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