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BEFORE & AFTER




# REINSTATE TRADITION

**Problem:** This former stable was last updated in the 1980s.

**Solution:** New plumbing and electrical,  
plus a kitchen overhaul and reconfigured interior

**LOCATION:** Aiken, South Carolina **DESIGNER:** Melissa Ervin; [melissoerwinid.com](http://melissoerwinid.com)

**SIZE OF REMODEL:** 3,900 square feet **DURATION OF PROJECT:** 1 year



**[EXTERIOR]** Fortunately, the home's exterior was already appealing and needed just a touch of repair. Designer Melissa Ervin had the existing roof replaced with new architectural shingles. Clad in its original cedar shakes, the home had a beautiful patina. The sprawling branches of a venerable live oak unify the two sides of the house and provide shade for the landscape plantings.



## [BEST RENOVATION TIP]

“I ZEROED IN ON A MOODY GRAY PALETTE THAT’S SHADY AND COOL FOR THE HOT SUMMERS AND CONVEYS COMFORT ON A FARM, ONLY DRESSIER!”

—DESIGNER MELISSA ERVIN



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iving in a horse stable isn't everyone's cup of tea. But for horsewoman Sam Cato, the draw was irresistible. This house sat under the trees on a former estate, a shingle-style cottage that no one would guess had started life as a stable and carriage house. In the spot where the carriages used to be stored, there was a long, open living/dining area. Flanking it were a kitchen and guest rooms on one side and a master suite and office on the other. Best of all, Sam could walk through the back door to reach the horse stalls and saddle up.

No major improvements had been made to the house since its 1980s conversion. "Pipes embedded in the cement under the pine floors were leaking and had to be jackhammered out," Sam says. She remembered some European oak flooring she'd spotted while renovating a previous home. "The finish was hand waxed, and the gray tones complemented the weathered shingles outside," she says. That flooring was the inspiration for the mood that Sam and Charleston designer Melissa Ervin would use as the basis for the home's new decor.



## [LIVING ROOM]

In addition to replacing the oak floors, Melissa removed the chair rails to show off a continuous stretch of original V-groove paneling. She replaced the dark wood mantel with a larger, painted version inspired by a Georgian design, and she bathed the room in a pale, crisp gray (Stony Ground by Farrow & Ball). She also removed the built-in cabinet doors, replacing them with V-groove doors for consistency.

**[DINING ROOM]** The task of divvying up the slender room and allowing it to function as separate areas was tricky. The center of the room was the prime spot for the crystal chandelier, so Melissa placed the table beneath it. The result: a center table that opens up for buffets for entertaining while serving as a divider for the two seating areas on either end.

BEFORE

New oak floors from Bois Chamols have been distressed to look aged.

**[KITCHEN]**

The existing 1980s-era kitchen was dark, with a poor layout and outdated appliances. Melissa removed the tile floor and replaced it with French antique oak, added white painted cabinets topped with marble, and installed a new range and custom hood flanked by cabinetry, making the once-empty center wall the new focal point of the room.

**[COLLECTIONS]**

An antique Welsh cupboard fits the farmhouse kitchen motif and adds warmth and richness with its deep green interior. Among the items showcased on its shelves: a taxidermy hen and rooster, an eclectic assortment of china, favorite pieces of framed art, and a collection of woven baskets. Silver pieces add a touch of sparkle, and other animal collectibles reflect a nature-inspired theme that is continued throughout Sam's house.



Canned lighting and drywall were replaced with a chandelier and a beaded-board ceiling.



A pendant fits perfectly here: Waterfall from Chameleon ([chameleon59.com](http://chameleon59.com)).

"I was tired of the look of white or stainless steel," Sam says of her choice of a gray farm sink.

BEFORE



The equestrian toile (GDT1586) is by Gastón y Daniela through Brunschwig & Filz.



#### [BEDROOM]

In the attic-like guest sleeping quarters, stained wood trim went from dark and heavy to a crisp linen hue. Melissa outfitted the space in 90 yards of toile, which was paper-backed to hang as a wallcovering and also used on the chair, bedskirt, shades, and lamps for impact. The wood floors were painted the same color as the trim (Linen White by Benjamin Moore) to help the room feel more spacious.





Roman shades give this small room with low ceilings maximum light.