

The CHRONICLE of the HORSE

# UnTACKED

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**COURTNEY, CONTINUED**  
*Fresh Perspective  
From A Former  
Dressage Star*

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Jason, River  
& Courtney Dye

**A MOTHER'S LOVE**  
*Passing It On To The  
Next Generation*

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**STABLE  
LIVING**

**BARN-TO-HOME CONVERSIONS  
TO TAKE YOUR BREATH AWAY**

A SUPPLEMENT TO THE CHRONICLE OF THE HORSE



## Hitchcock Haven

*Aiken, S.C.*

*Melissa Ervin Interior Design*

*Photos courtesy of Melissa Ervin*

Sam Cato had long admired a stable-turned-cottage she passed on her frequent hacks to nearby Hitchcock Woods in Aiken, S.C., and as a home renovation addict, she couldn't help but dream about the place.

So when she got the chance to purchase and update the historic horseshoe-shaped barn, which had originally been converted to a home in the 1980s, Cato

jumped. Partnering with local contractor Grant Larlee of Larlee Construction and Charleston, S.C., based interior designer and architect Melissa Ervin, the new homeowner got cracking—literally.

First on their list was the unsexy task of replacing all the plumbing and electrical wiring, a challenge made harder when they realized the pipes had been buried in the cement slab floor.

"All the pipes and cement had to be dug up and relocated, and then mounds of dirt were brought in so the cement slab floor could be replaced with antique French Oak floors," said Ervin.

With a grayish, hand-waxed finish, the floors helped cozy up the space, especially in concert with butted board walls throughout the interior, which gave



**Sam Cato's converted South Carolina stable is quintessentially Aiken.**



**Patch the Jack Russell makes himself comfortable on a mohair sofa in the living room.**

**The Hitchcock Woods are located adjacent to Cato's neighborhood, an easy hack down a horse-friendly red dirt road.**



**Original details** on one of the former barn's Dutch doors.

**Homeowner Sam Cato is a lover of equestrian antiques and collectibles,** and she creates beautiful vignettes throughout the house.

**"Sam Cato is an avid horsewoman, and she knew Aiken was the perfect place to live with her horses,"** said designer Melissa Ervin.

a nod to the original purpose of the structure. But they also carry out a theme started on the exterior by the barn's weathered gray cedar shingles. Bright white Dutch doors also retain the barn aesthetic.

Less rustic and more French country chic than other repurposed barns, Cato's home has a feminine touch.

"The three of us had a great collaboration, and we met weekly on site to make decisions and problem-solve," said Ervin. "The pace was fast, and it was definitely 'design as you go!' But Sam is a true purist with a love of history and antiques, which I share with her, so she and I had great fun making sure this home gave a nod to its past as a barn yet was made current and comfortable as a home.

"I love when a historic building can be re-purposed," she continued. "This barn is located in the historic district of Aiken that is so well-preserved, and the location is the perfect setup to walk out of your home, mount your horse and ride out in the neighborhood. It's so nice that in its transformation to a home, it fits into the neighborhood and looks like it has been there all along. That's the best compliment that a renovation can have." >>



**Hand-painted  
hardwood floors and  
Gastón y Daniela's  
equestrian tolle**

welcome visitors to the  
guest suite, with the  
bedroom in the left area.

