

Your Favorite Look: Kitchens With Rural Soul

COUNTRY decorating

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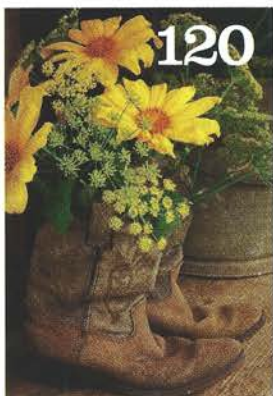
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PERSONAL TOUCHES The couple purchased the antique church pew as a first wedding anniversary gift for each other. Lewis bought her husband the framed Mississippi River map, a reproduction of one once owned by his grandfather.



rustic retreat

An interior designer makes her family home sing fresh country in Little Rock, Arkansas.

written by Charlotte Safavi
photography by Mark Lohman
styling by Sunday Hendrickson



ROARING FIREPLACE The stone fireplace and its wood mantel inspired the home's neutral color palette and natural rustic beauty. The wrought iron chandelier and sunburst style mirror hang low to counter the vaulted ceiling.



HAPPY FAMILY Though the Lewises don't live in the countryside, *left*, the relaxed design of their home is a natural sanctuary reflected in their smiles and lifestyle. **FRESH FERN** Antique olive oil jugs, *below*, serve as vases for green garden ferns. The mirror surround is made of a repurposed wine barrel, adding another wood element to the décor. **CASUAL COUNTRY** A mix of solid heirloom pieces, *opposite*, like Lewis's great-grandmother's leather-and-wood trunk share space with new items, such as the slipcovered sofa. Everything is kid-friendly or placed somewhere safe. **USE IT** Krista is a big believer in using her collectibles, including this antique serving dish, *bottom*.

Interior designer Krista Lewis saw great potential in the 1970's home that she shares with her husband Dan and their three young children in a suburb of Little Rock, Arkansas.

"When I first saw the house, I loved the great room, with its stone fireplace, vaulted beams, and open balcony," says Lewis. "It had a lot of architectural character for a home of that era."

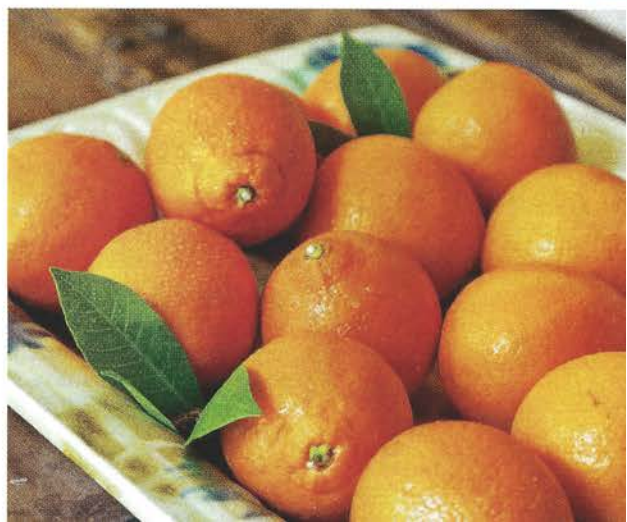
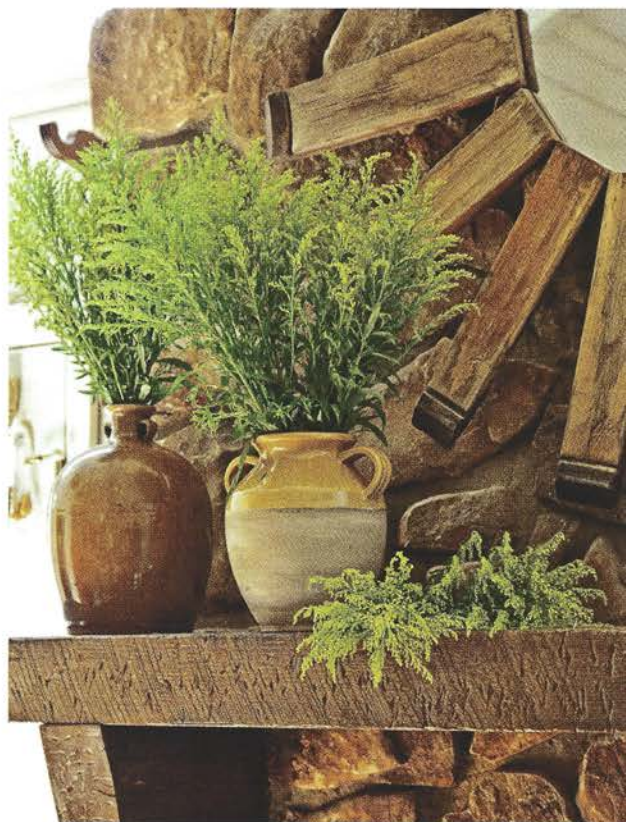
All the woodwork, including that of the kitchen cabinetry, was dark and gloomy, and the stair posts and balcony railings were cumbersome in shape and widely spaced. Still, Lewis saw an opportunity to make the house a home. "I switched all the posts to something kid-friendly, then lightened up everything for freshness with a cream-colored paint," says Lewis, adding, "I wanted to create a serene space for my busy family and a neutral envelope to work with."

Lewis varied the paint finishes: the walls, eggshell; the ceilings, flat; the woodwork, cabinets and doors, semi-gloss. She kept the hues uniform because, she shares, "It makes everything look bigger and the background recedes."

A similar approach was applied to floor carpeting and window treatments. The natural rugs are either Berber or seagrass, while bamboo blinds and burlap panels filter sunlight. "My aim was to make a comfortable family home, which led me to casual country design," says Lewis. For upholstered furniture, she worked in easy-to-wash white sofa slipcovers and chair skirts, as well as darker patterned pieces in stain-resistant fabrics. She then introduced an edited mix of new and antique wood furnishings. "I love the texture of wood—its history and durability. I created a visual variation of wood furnishings, some lighter, some darker, some painted," says Lewis.

Other favored materials include wrought iron, which appears in hanging light fixtures. Lewis also brought the outdoors in by adding pops of accent green throughout her interiors, be it in her office's new lampshades or in the great room's antique side table, which has been with the couple a long time.

Beloved collections—like old glazed crocks and glass wine jugs, as well as assorted baskets—are sparingly used, layering texture and adding appeal. "Everything is sentimental in my furnishings," Lewis adds. They all have stories to them."





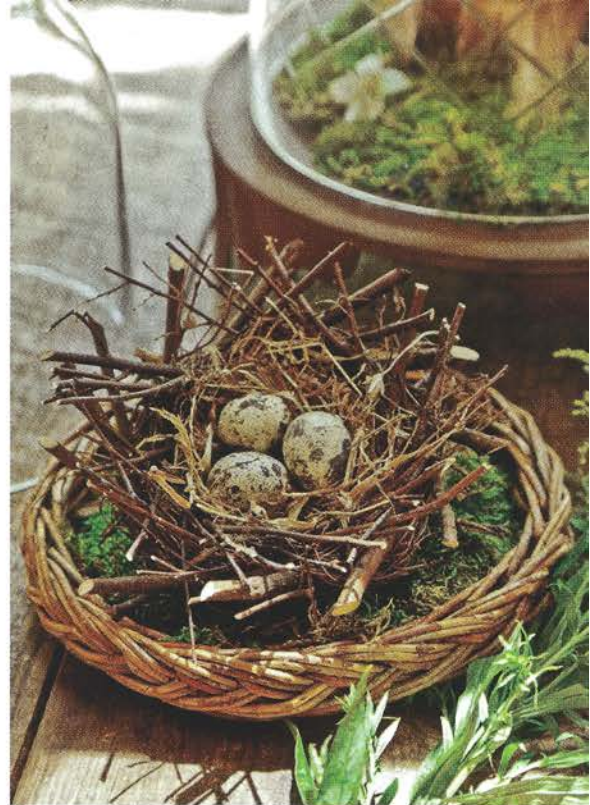
**can-do
decor**

Cardboard decoys are framed flat on a textured burlap background.

BASKET CASE

"For storage, I like the rustic texture and practical shape of baskets," says Lewis, who has amassed a large collection of antique, vintage, and new basket-ware. Here she shares tips on how she uses them:

- 1] Office duty** Keep all office supplies and craft samples stashed in assorted baskets. Label them and stack depending on frequency of usage.
- 2] Easy dining** Storing basic silverware and napkins in lidded baskets makes setting the table simple, especially for young kids.
- 3] Portable pleasure** In addition to stationary storage baskets of different sizes, keep handled ones handy for transporting toys, knitting, and more to different rooms.



flea market faves

Rest rolls of vintage fabric in a corner for pops of color and pattern.

MAKING A NEST A round basket holds a bird's nest, *top*, and dried moss' making a pretty decorative vignette. **EFFORTLESS OFFICE** Much as Lewis loves old wood furnishings, *above*, her office furniture is mostly new and hardy, chosen with comfort and efficiency in mind. An antique painting with her favorite green hues serves as a scenic backdrop. **HANDSOME HUTCH** Hard to believe, but this distress-painted large country hutch, *opposite*, is a reproduction. Lewis takes full advantage of its shelving and lower cabinets for her storage needs. Baskets are labeled to easily ID contents.





**can-do
decor**

Cover an undesirable backsplash with a fireproof antique metal ceiling tin.

KITCHEN REDO Other than painting the original gloomy wood cabinetry and switching out its dated hardware, little was done in the kitchen, saving the young family plenty of money. **MORNING GLORY** Contrasting dark wood X-chairs pull up to a natural pine table in the cozy breakfast nook. Seat cushions were added for kid comfort and get tossed in the washer as needed.

**can-do
decor**

Hang multiples
of botanical
prints or pressed
wildflowers for
a quick wall fill.

