

# Life at Home

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## This is a barn?

Instead of cows, we now have offices and party rooms

By Mary Grauerholz

GLOBE CORRESPONDENT

Barns nearly always draw the eye, even among those who don't necessarily want one. Perhaps they're reminiscent of more romantic times. Some barns, of course, are still hard-working partners on the farm. Others have been given new lives. Still others never had a past: They're brand new.

Rick Anderson, a builder-designer in West Tisbury on Martha's Vineyard, knows the historical value of barns.

"In the 1700s, people had to live on the farm, and the barn was the most important building," he says. "That's what kept everybody alive." He restores old barns, sometimes moving them from their original location, which can be controversial.

"I'm all for saving them where they are," he says. Still, if a barn is

going to be destroyed, he may disassemble it, number the pieces, and reconstruct it somewhere else. One of his projects was the Martha's Vineyard Agricultural Society Hall, a beauty that he and 50 volunteers dismantled in New Hampshire and reconstructed, with a historically correct addition, in West Tisbury.

Jill Neubauer and Stephen Stimson in Hatchville built a new barn for an old-fashioned purpose: It shelters their horses, tractor, and tack. Janice Battle opened an antiques store in her antique Concord barn. Barbara and Elliot Schildkrout plan to live in their renovated barn, built in Westport around 1860.

Every barn has a story. Here are a few.



GLOBE PHOTO/JULIA CUMES

Leighton and Julie Allenby

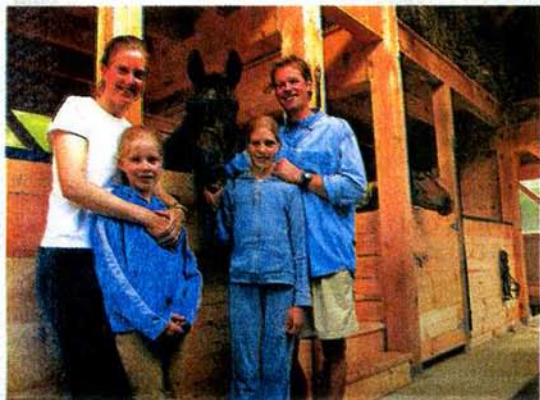
BRAEBURN FARM, HATCHVILLE



GLOBE PHOTO/JULIA CUMES

Stephen Stimson and Jill Neubauer

LUCKY PINES, HATCHVILLE



GLOBE PHOTO/ALIA CUMES

## Jill Neubauer and Stephen Stimson

LUCKY PINES, HATCHVILLE

Jill Neubauer, 42, is an architect in Falmouth. Stephen Stimson, also 42, is a landscape architect. They have two daughters: Annie, 10, and Elizabeth, 8.

**THE SETTING** The Neubauer-Stimson home is actually a collection of buildings, including their house, a chicken coop, a shed/workshop, and the barn. Next, the couple says, will be a run-in shed for the horses when weather turns bad. The structures, all of a similar, striking, slant-roof construction, are scattered under a thick grove of majestic pines on a 4.5-acre lot fronting freshwater Deep Pond.

**BARN DATE** Brand new; last finishing nail will be pounded in August.

**HISTORY** The barn, with its slant roof and a majestic look, echoes the house and outbuildings. Constructed by John T. Miller Barnbuilders of East Harwich, it is a mixture of historic and modern materials, including a hemlock frame and pine siding. Two walls of the second-story loft are sided in polycarbonate, a greenhouse material, allowing light in and causing the barn to glow at night from light within. The windows are classic style, but bigger than those of most barns. The couple positioned the barn and paddock on the property's highest point (good for air circulation and drainage), where they form a visual and linear connection with the house.

**CURRENT INCARNATION** Home to three horses, who occupy spacious stalls outfitted with rubber mats for comfort. Steve parks his tractor in the remaining stall. "Everybody (in the family) gets a stall," Jill says. "You can put in it whatever you want." A special space, now being finished, is a tack room equipped with a game table with classic low-hanging lights. "We see playing a lot of Monopoly out there," Jill says.

**WHY A BARN?** Steve was raised on Charbrook Farm in Princeton, which has a 250-year-old dairy barn. His parents still keep heifers and hay in that barn. Jill grew up around horses in her native Wisconsin with a dad who she says was "a lifelong, horse-obsessed guy. ... For both of us, having the barn is a lifelong dream."

**THREE WORDS ON YOUR BARN** "Sentimental," "funky," "hopeful"

**LOFTY FACT** At night, when the barn loft is lit, the structure glows like a Japanese lantern.

**QUOTE** "Barns should be thought of as intentionally as houses." - Jill Neubauer



GLOBE STAFF PHOTOS/MATTHEW J. LEE



## John and Janice Battle

CONCORD

John Battle, 48, is an architect who has designed historically correct barns, including the barn on the Belmont property of Governor Mitt Romney and his wife, Ann. Janice Battle, 45, is the owner of Beyond the Garden, an antiques shop now in the barn, next to a rose-covered pergola in the back yard. The Battles have three children, Meghan, 15, Molly, 13, and Luke, 11.

**THE SETTING** The Battles' barn is behind their 1788 home, amid gardens with granite paths meandering through the flowers. Here and there are antique gravestones, relics from the original owner, who was a stone cutter.

**BARN DATE** 1850

**ORIGINAL USE** Stone cutter's shop

**HISTORY** When the Battles bought the property in 1995, they were "fascinated by an antique house," Janice Battle says. They began a major restoration, and the barn was the last piece of the project. Janice, an interior designer, had wanted to open a shop, and decided the barn was the natural place. Last fall, she opened Beyond the Garden.

**CURRENT INCARNATION** Beyond the Garden features French antiques, including linens, pottery, and, for the moment at least, an 1800's day bed. The barn exudes its historic past, with a pine ceiling and tongue-and-groove siding. Doors are the originals, rebuilt.

**WHY A BARN?** The Battles are drawn to historic places and themes. John Battle, with a history of restoring old barns and building historically accurate ones, had a natural predilection for the Concord property.

**THREE WORDS ON YOUR BARN** "Antique," "antique," "antique"

**LOFTY FACT** The house-and-barn property was a stopover in the Underground Railroad, a secret network that helped fugitive slaves reach freedom in the North.

**QUOTE** "It's a lot of work, but it's great." - Janice Battle, on her family's intense effort restoring their Bedford Street property



GLOBE PHOTO/ROBERT E. KLEIN

## Barbara and Elliot Schildkrot

WESTPORT

Barbara and Elliot Schildkrot, both 56, are psychiatrists in Newton. They have two children: Aaron, 24, and Emily, 22.

**THE SETTING** The Schildkrots' river-barn is on a lovely pastoral land along the Westport River. The property has a long history as a farm, and probably was farmed last approximately 60 years ago. The land is dominated by upland fields and salt marsh and is laced with old rock walls.

**BARN DATE** Probably 1860 (the date is burned on boards uncovered during restoration)

**ORIGINAL USE** Farm

**HISTORY** Old deeds that the Schildkrots have gathered show that Ephraim Gifford owned the property in the late 1800s. The original house no longer exists. The Schildkrots' house is a combination of the former barn and woodshed. A previous owner restored it in the 1960s. When the Schildkrots bought it in May 2001, they began planning a rebuild. "We wanted to renovate it to make it work as a living space and retain some of the original features of the barn," Barbara said. They worked with architect Michele Foster of Portsmouth,

R.I., to begin renovation last November. "It was in very bad shape," Foster says. "It's post-and-beam, but most of the posts were rotted." She opened it up more to feel like a barn and installed a glass gable-end addition to "reference" a typical grain elevator on barns. The original post-and-beam frame remains in several rooms.

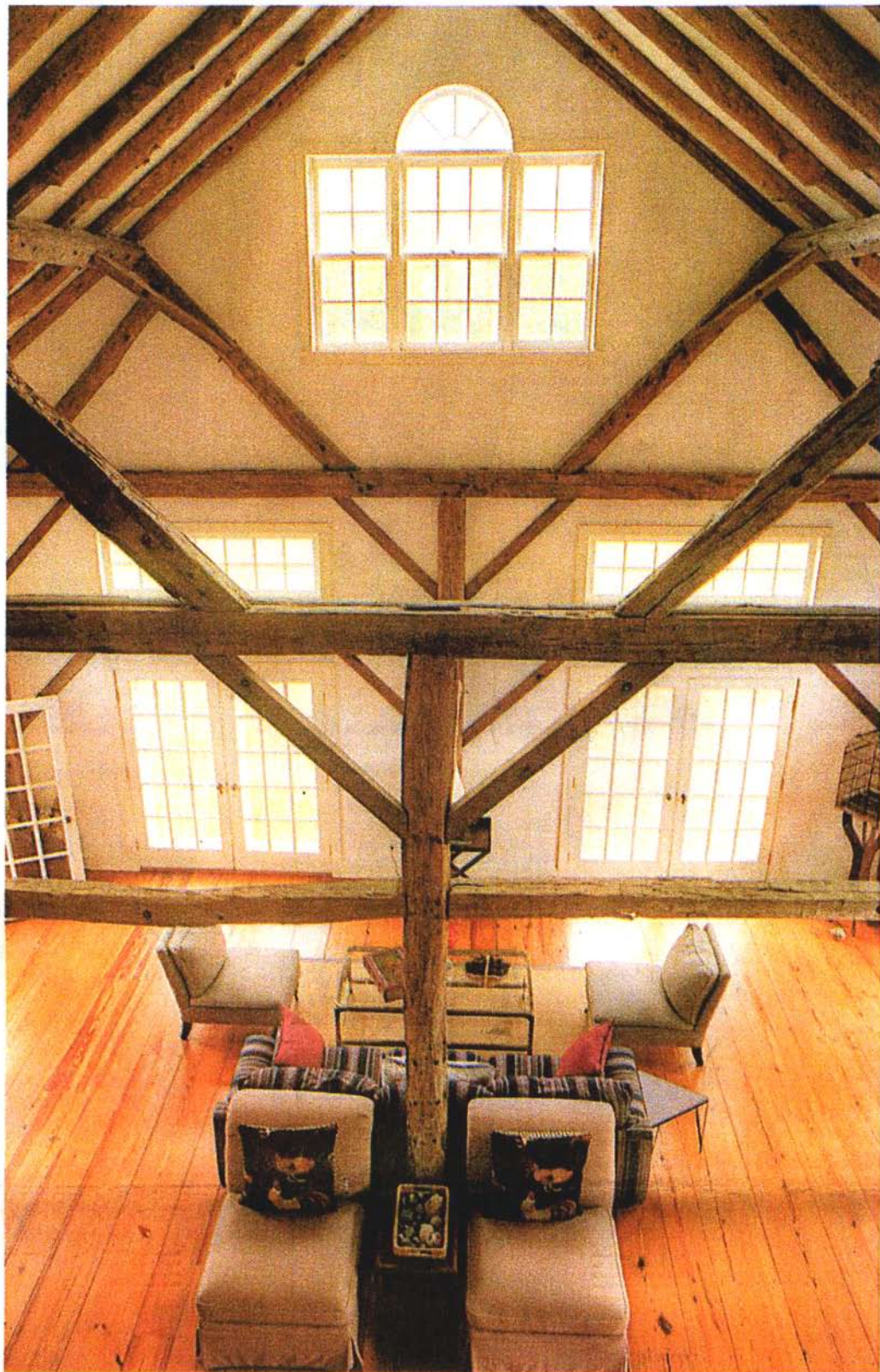
**CURRENT INCARNATION** Summer home

**WHY A BARN?** "We were interested in the land and having a piece of land that retained its sense of original New England farm property," Elliot said. "Those tend to come with barns."

**THREE WORDS ON YOUR BARN** "Continuity of history"

**LOFTY FACT** Word about town is that the Schildkrot structure is one of the oldest standing barns in Westport.

**QUOTE** "The whole area (of Westport) is filled with rock walls that carry with them this extraordinary history of labor, trying to turn this area, so inhospitable to farming, into farmland. There's a feeling everywhere you walk that you're living in the legacy of early New England hard labor to create a life out of soil." - Elliot Schildkrot



GLOBE STAFF PHOTOS/JANET KNOTT



## Jim and Susan Cole

BLACKTHORN FARM  
WEST TISBURY

Jim Cole, 51, is an attorney in Washington, D.C. Susan Cole, 47, is a graphic artist. They have two children, Amanda (above), 15, and Jackson, 11.

**THE SETTING** The Coles' barn (left) forms part of their summer home, where they spend several weeks each year. The house is on the flats on the south side of Martha's Vineyard, an expansive space bordered by forest.

**BARN DATE** 1700s

**ORIGINAL USE** Farm

**HISTORY** The Coles' barn is joined to an 1840s-era Cape-style house by way of a third piece of construction. Builder Rick Anderson found the house in Enfield, N.H., and the barn in Guilford, Vt. The resulting home is an artful three-part structure consisting of the antique house, antique barn, and an Anderson-designed joining piece, juxtaposed at angles. It harks back to "a pretty conventional New England style, to add on as the family grew," Anderson says.

**CURRENT INCARNATION** The "barn room," as the Coles call it, is an open, airy space and often the setting for parties. The left area is Jim's home office.

**WHY A BARN?** The Coles bought the house and barn structure after Anderson rebuilt them. The barn room (shown here) boasts five sets of French doors, a wide-board yellow pine floor, and exposed beams and rafters that show ax marks from hand hewing.

**THREE WORDS ON THEIR BARN** "Sculptural," "sanctuary," "grand"

**LOFTY FACT** The barn's exposed beams and rafters form a spectacular pattern with five types of wood: ash, hemlock, cherry, maple, and oak.

**QUOTE** "The barn is art, in and of itself. You don't need anything on the walls; the walls themselves are art." - Jim Cole

# Families are raising barns into homes

## Leighton and Julie Allenby

BRAEBURN FARM, HATCHVILLE

Leighton Allenby, 49, owns a tree-moving business. Julie Allenby, 43, helps him in the office and cares for the couple's three horses and two boarders. The Allenbys have two children, Todd, 23, and Krista, 21.

**THE SETTING** The Allenbys' home, the historic Silas Hatch House, and two barns are perched on a 5-acre lot on a bucolic street.

**BARN DATE** Unknown; the house, however, is dated 1843.

**ORIGINAL USE** Dairy farm

**HISTORY** The structure is post-and-beam joined with wooden pegs. It is painted barn red and fronted by a split-rail fence lined with a lush array of plants, including black-eyed Susans, daisies, and yarrow.

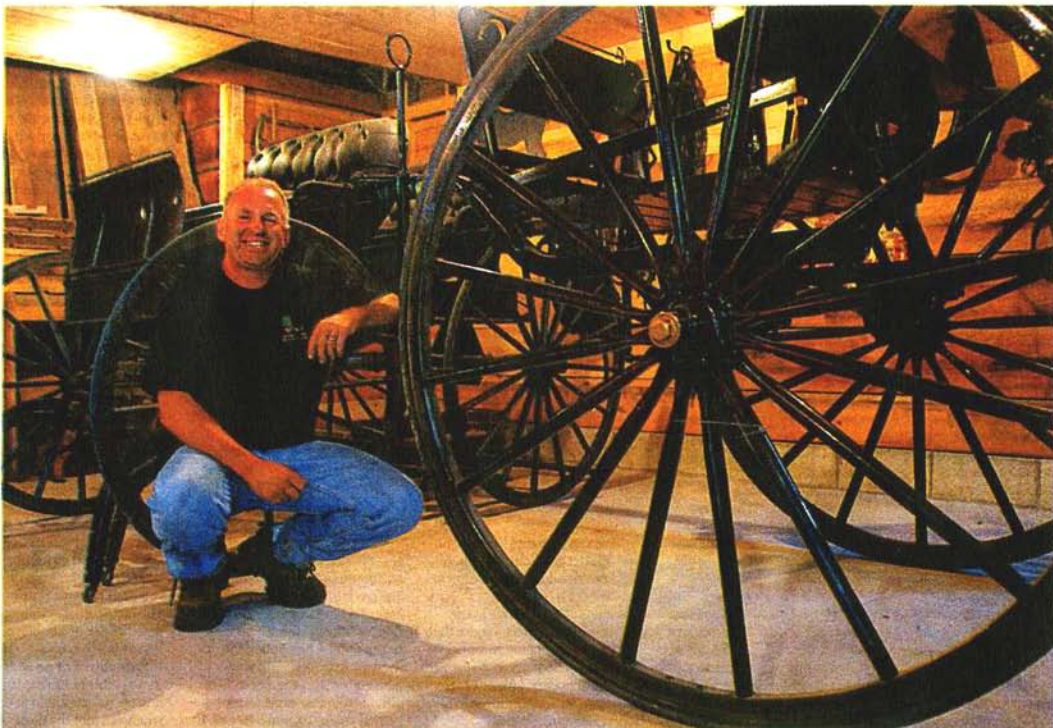
**CURRENT INCARNATION** Tack room; also storage space for Leighton's 1890 Democrat wagon and extra wood. "I don't throw any wood away," Leighton says. His green 1954 Chevy pickup is usually parked in front.

**WHY A BARN?** For the Allenbys, the question wasn't, "Why a barn?" but, "How many barns?" Leighton spent summers outdoors on his grandparents' cranberry bogs. He and Julie ride regularly; she participated in her first hunt in May. They raise horses, including a Belgian draft horse, Chip, who weighs 2,000 pounds and occupies two stalls.

**THREE WORDS ON YOUR BARN** "Rustic," "enduring," "welcoming"

**LOFTY FACT** The barn's original sign, which reads Braeburn Farm, had become separated from the property. Leighton was united with the 100-year-old sign through an antique dealer in Falmouth.

**QUOTE** "This barn, for our family, our lifestyle, fits like a well-worn glove. It's a wonderful place to be, to get away from the daily rat race." - Julie Allenby



GLOBE PHOTO/JULIA CUMES