

Fall 2019
Vol. 40, No. 3

Country Home

**SIMPLE
& COZY**

DECORATING IDEAS
FOR YOUR
FAVORITE SEASON

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**STYLE
LESSONS
FROM
AN 1800s
FARMHOUSE**

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A HARVEST PARTY TO REMEMBER

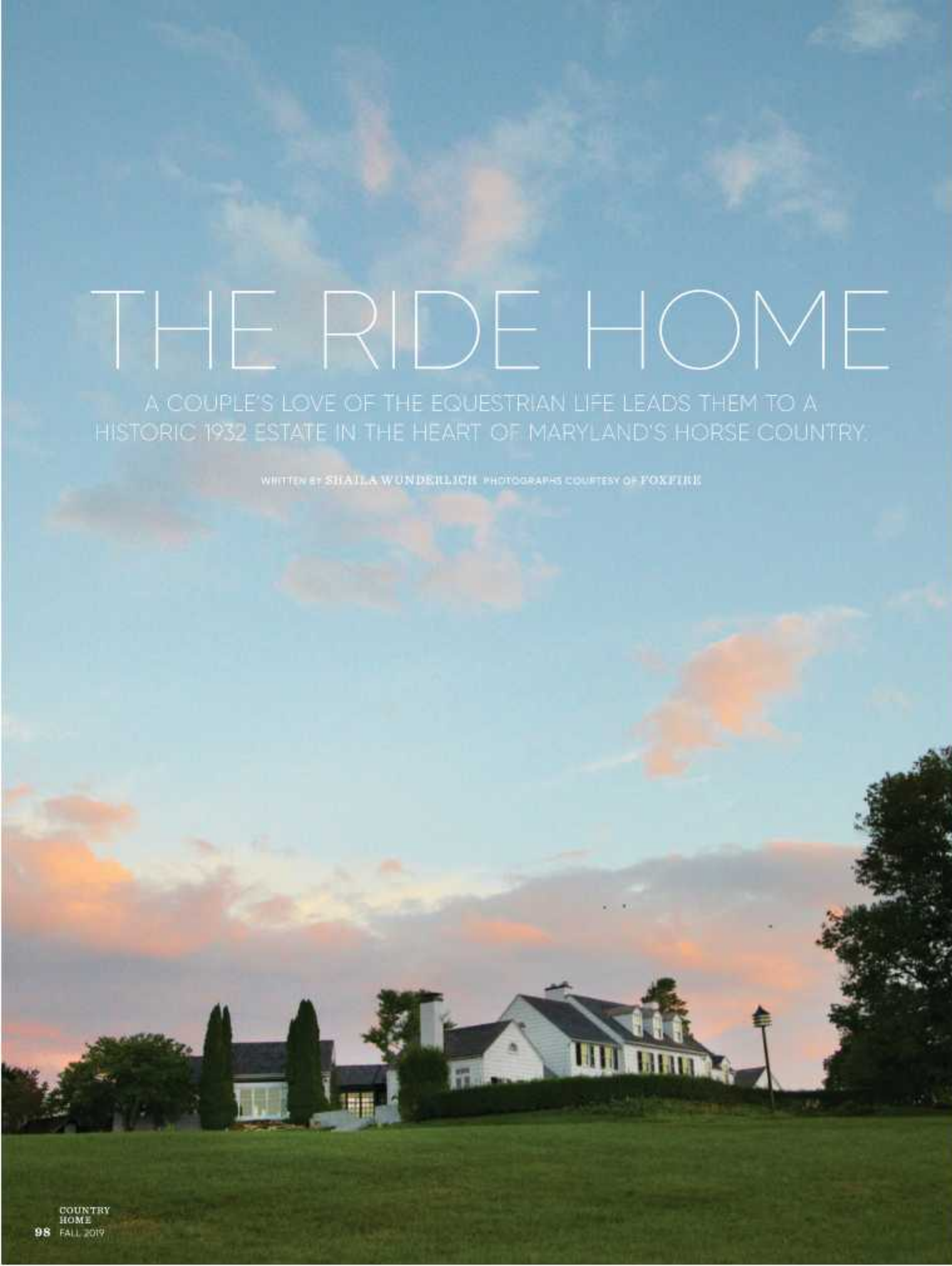
EASY PROJECTS USING PUMPKINS & GOURDS

THE RIDE HOME

A COUPLE'S LOVE OF THE EQUESTRIAN LIFE LEADS THEM TO A HISTORIC 1932 ESTATE IN THE HEART OF MARYLAND'S HORSE COUNTRY.

WRITTEN BY SHAILA WUNDERLICH PHOTOGRAPHS COURTESY OF FOXFIRE

OPPOSITE This was the view of the Estate at Foxfire as it appeared to Alex and Sue Glasscock's riding club on its rides through My Lady's Manor, a tract of 10,000 Maryland acres preserved for agricultural and equestrian pursuits. **THIS PHOTO** Browns of every shade and texture—including a custom cut-and-bound sisal rug, fabric wallcovering, leather stitching on lampshades, and soft vintage leather on found club chairs—cloak this living area from floor to ceiling.





LEFT An arched hallway on the second-floor landing leads to one of the two master suites in the house. THIS PHOTO Guests gravitate to this cozy living area on cold, rainy days. Interior designer Steven Gambrel designed the deep banquette-style sectional and square ottoman to fit the room's scale. It's also just right for reading, chatting, or napping.



fOR MORE THAN TWO DECADES, ALEX AND SUE Glasscock witnessed The Estate at Foxfire as a beautiful blur. The Maryland manor read like a stately streak of white, black, and green, flashing in and out of peripheral view as they whizzed past on horseback. Part of a historic 10,000-acre tract of countryside preserved for agricultural and equestrian use, Foxfire became a routine getaway for the Malibu-based couple from their first visit 28 years ago. Its uninterrupted, open landscape makes it the ultimate playground for riders wanting to gallop free, fast, and far. Not until 2016, when the estate went on the market, were these career equestrians enticed to dismount and take a closer look.

Alex's first glimpse of Foxfire with his boots on the ground was of the driveway encircled by a thick canopy of maple trees. "Someone took the care and consideration to plant all those trees, knowing they wouldn't be around to see them full-grown," Alex says. "It just amazes me."

By the time they emerged out of the driveway that day, Alex knew he and Sue would be Foxfire's next stewards. In that role, they would pay forward the altruistic spirit of the driveway's design via their own renovations to the manor. First up: more trees. Alex headed straight for the property's walks and pathways to start new allées of trees.

The house itself, a 1932 center-hall Colonial, was time-wrecked. Its floor plan was out-of-date and its structure featured more than a few architectural undesirables, including asymmetrical windows, false windows, and concealed vaulted ceilings. But with the right help, Sue and Alex believed they could rejigger the three-floor, six-bedroom, 8,000-square-foot manor to match modern



lifestyles, while still deferring to its original architecture. They had a three-step master plan: First, focus on entertaining, as the pair had gained a tight-knit community of equestrian friends over the years; second, open the house for seasonal event rentals; and finally, allow for lots of riding.

Help came from New York interior designer Steven Gambrel, who kicked things off by engaging his new clients in ongoing, in-depth conversations about their vision for Foxfire. "Essentially, they wanted to build a lifestyle compound based around equestrian pursuits, with an ease and comfort for friends and family," Gambrel says.

Although Sue and Alex wanted the house to reflect its equestrian identity, they wanted it subtle—more home than hunt club. Riding elements do pop up throughout the rambling rooms, but overtly horsey stuff is saved for the coatroom, a nook tucked along the foyer where, traditionally, riders traded in their boots and coats for a nip of brandy. Gambrel and his team kept this room as it was, layered with tweedy textures, dark colors, and antiques. "Anytime we get a horse-themed gift, it goes in that room," Alex says.

ABOVE The kitchen of the 1932 Colonial runs the depth of the house. The upholstered banquette, where guests can gaze out onto the bucolic dovecote and manicured lawn, is a favorite spot for early breakfasts. **OPPOSITE, BOTTOM LEFT** Gambrel is responsible for curating most of the house's collections, including the displays of hotel silver and vintage tableware in the kitchen.



LEFT Pale, natural driftwood hues give the kitchen a quiet rusticity. Glints of silver add their elegant sheen to the setting. **BELOW** The rough and raw sawback table is a homeowner find and among the most commented-on pieces in the house. Gambrel crowned it with earthy objects and an eye-catching collection of graphic prints.





Gambrel carried out the couple's fondness for black and white along the interior baseboards, molding, and central staircase—even over its original white-oak floors. “It makes the rooms more spare and chic and contrasts sharply with the white waxed-plaster walls,” Gambrel says.

To restore symmetry to the exterior and light to the interior, new windows were added and false windows uncovered. One exhumation returned the curving staircase to its original majesty. “The light flooded in and instantly the space appeared to double in size,” Alex says.

In one final gesture of stewardship—executed with wedding guests in mind—the two incorporated a twist for the dovecote outside the kitchen windows. Although most dovecotes maintain a strict eat-and-fly schedule for their tenants, the Glasscocks trained their doves to eat and stay. “At weddings, you’ll typically see doves released and flying away,” Alex says. “We liked the idea of them sticking with you for the day.”

Just as the refurbished estate now beckons all to stay and feel at home. □

RESOURCES, SEE PAGE 111.

ABOVE Gambrel swallowed up an extra bedroom to create this expansive master suite on the second level. The four-poster is an antique. Sisal rugs are custom-cut to span the entire floor, a favorite touch of Gambrel's, he says, because it creates a “rustic yet tailored feel.” **OPPOSITE, BOTTOM LEFT** The master bath is understated but has all the right amenities. With its clean lines and soft gray finish, this chest-on-legs-style vanity doesn't visually overwhelm the sleek glass shower but offers welcome storage.



ABOVE A deep-seated armchair offers an ideal spot to linger in the warm, steamy atmosphere post-bath. Textural down-up shades offer both light and privacy. **THIS PHOTO** The curved banister is part of the house's original architecture. Gambrel had the frames of these 1950s-era artworks, purchased from a Paris flea market, painted black to create a cohesive grouping and visually link them to the crisp architecture.



LEFT Foxfire's stable of 18 horses are thoroughbred "timber horses," so-called because they are bred to jump wood fences. **RIGHT** A reupholstering of its original built-in bench seats was the only change made to the house's traditional coatroom. **BELOW** Unfinished oak-paneled walls, tile floors, and hanging racks keep equestrian gear organized in sophisticated but practical style. **BELOW RIGHT** A soapstone sink in the coatroom stands ready to wash up hands or wipe down boots.



"THE FURNITURE WAS CAREFULLY SELECTED TO BE RAW, VINTAGE, AND AUTHENTIC WITH WAXED FINISHES AND ALL VERY SPECIAL."

—INTERIOR DESIGNER STEVEN GAMBREL



ABOVE A settee-style oak storage bench makes a handy spot for riders to ditch their boots and catch their breath. **ABOVE RIGHT** Foxfire's property still claims its original chapel, which today is used as a guesthouse. **RIGHT** A properly stocked bar in the coatroom area is ready to warm up riders and celebrate a successful return to home base. Rich, glossy red paint on the wall paneling brings out the undertones in the wood cupboards and window trim.

