

FIRST IMPRESSIONS The entryway barn doors were Jill Bornstein's inspiration and set the stage for the modern farmhouse they desired. The family wanted everything a larger house might offer, but on a smaller scale.





Under the Elms

THE BORNSTEINS FIND HOME ON MAIN STREET

IT SEEMS FITTING that when the Jeff and Jill Bornstein needed an interim home they should choose the Elms condominiums on Main Street. After all, the Elms has been offering visitors a home away from home since 1860 when Elm Shade Cottages served wealthy New Yorkers arriving for a country vacation.

The Bornsteins were not looking for a vacation retreat, however. When the family relocated to Boston in 2015, they suddenly found that three of their high-school-aged sons missed their friends and RHS. Their fourth son had already stayed behind to finish his senior year and the family was missing him. In spite of the fact that they loved everything about Boston, Jill said they thought it better “to allow the boys to finish here.”

But finding a home that reflected their newly adopted city lifestyle as well as offering everything a large family needs might have proved a challenge had they not immediately zeroed in on the Elms. The former inn and restaurant owned since the 1950s by the Scala family had charm, and location in the heart of the town. It also had a 300-year-old history of being an interim home to many.

They bought a three-story, red, barn-like unit with a newly constructed silo replacing one from the original property. No yard maintenance was an added plus, particularly as weekends would be filled with back-and-forth commutes between



NO SECRETS HERE Open shelving gave a nod to the desired farmhouse feel but with a very modern design. Boston-based designer Paula Daher was able to integrate their distinctive artwork into the modern farmhouse theme.



Ridgefield and Boston. When they first saw the unit Jill says it was just wallboard, which sweetened the deal because they envisioned a “modern farmhouse,” one with the sophisticated appeal of their city home but with all the character of the historical Elms. Having an empty canvas meant they could start from scratch creating the kind of space they wanted.

The Bornseins had tall orders. They wanted everything that could be found in a larger house but scaled down and without looking cramped or cluttered. There had to be plenty of wall space available for their distinctive artwork collection, which Jill credits Jeff with having “an eye for.” And they needed it quickly because they had a school deadline.

They hired Boston-based designer Paula Daher of Daher Interior Design because they were thrilled with what she did with their Back Bay brownstone. Daher is accustomed to making limited spaces feel larger than they are, but her real focus: “Making sure that the floor plan works for the family,” she says. In the Bornsteins case she knew the home had to be durable and functional enough for the four boys and their friends who would be thundering through. The open floor plan also had to have getaway spots for both the adults and the teens.



THE RIGHT TOUCH Texture was an underlying theme of this home as evidenced in the lively wallpaper in the study. The upstairs silo made a great hangout spot for the teens.



The first order of business was to design the kitchen space so it would be functional but attractive enough to act as a focal point. White cabinets with artistically designed pulls and quartz countertops anchor one side of the main floor. Open shelving creates the illusion of more space and gives a nod to the country feel, but with a modern look. The oversized island also gives it a spacious feel and gives the cooks plenty of room for preparation.

While the unit only had three bedrooms, it had the potential for more on the third floor. There they added two additional bedrooms, a casual family room, and a teen hangout in the silo. The master on the second floor has an adjoining sitting room, one of Jill's favorite spaces to get away.

Some of the challenges that the Bornsteins faced were solved by Jill's inspiration. Double barn doors cover the coat closet in the entry because Jill didn't want to walk into a small space and be confronted with "boring doors." Daher says that those doors set the stage for the modern farmhouse feel the family wanted, and she sparingly added reclaimed wood accents throughout the house to complement them. In the downstairs living space they grappled with what to do about a mantel. Jill was concerned that with a mantel, the TV mounted above the





A PRIVATE SPACE The master-bedroom suite with its cozy sitting room has the same attention to detail as the rest of the house and adds another showcase for the distinctive artwork. It's the perfect adult retreat.



fireplace would be at neck cramping height. Instead, they went without one—again setting the theme for the modern feel throughout.

Much of the material used to create the home came from local vendors: reclaimed wood accents from Board Silly Custom Sawmill, quartz countertops from Venezia Marble, and white oak flooring from Ridgefield Supply. Daher's signature design is to use as much texture as possible, done in subtle ways, and is evidenced by wallpaper and fabrics as well as sleek tiles offering contrast to practical soapstone countertops in the powder room. Instead of conventional hardware, there are interesting sculpted pieces on the kitchen cabinets. A lively colorful wallpaper in Jill's study offers a bold contrast to the understated design of the home.

The Bornsteins say they are thrilled with the outcome and love how their newly adopted city style translates not only into their home, but also into their lifestyle. They walk to town events, walk to the restaurants, and can sit on the back porch listening to music in the park. As Jill says, they have the best of all worlds. ■

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