

# The State House

STYLES & STORIES *of the* SOUTHERN HOME

## A Place in the Sun

*Balancing the aesthetics of an authentic farmhouse with the practicality of modern materials and a contemporary interior, architect Amanda Thomas' design is a bright spot in the landscape for Blair and Matt Vana.*

*by Susan Frampton  
photos by Inspiro 8 Studios*

**New Addition**  
A bright kitchen offers beautiful views of the forest.



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top a sunlit knoll surrounded by pine forest, a sprawling white farmhouse sits as comfortably as though it has owned this space for a century or more. Though a place like this might not seem an uncommon sight in the rural landscape outside Simpsonville, SC, a closer look reveals that this is no ordinary farmhouse.

When Blair and Matt Vana decided to move from Greenville with their three children, they turned to Amanda Thomas of Tindall Architecture Workshop to design their new home on a 150-acre tract of land in the gentle rolling hills outside of Simpsonville. To get a feel for the property, Thomas first viewed it from an ATV, noting its natural contours, the small creek running along its perimeter and its surrounding woodland forest. She was immediately captivated by the

**Warm Welcome**  
This Page: towering beams make the living space feel even larger; the family shares their land with feathered friends; meaningful details on the staircase make a house a home. Opposite Page: the spacious kitchen is a favorite place to gather





natural beauty and inspired by the Vana's vision for their dream home in the beautiful setting.

Though they would not farm the land in the traditional sense, the Vana's number one requirement of the design was that it be an updated version of a real farm, constructed with modern building materials that would require less upkeep than a traditionally built structure. Thomas immediately grasped the concept and set out to create their dream home. She began by positioning the home to take advantage of the sunlight. Incorporating a deep, wrap-around porch with entryways strategically placed to allow the cross breeze created by open doors, her plans also provided room for rocking chairs and the obligatory porch swing. A metal roof tied both wings of the home to the main section, with a covered breezeway to the asymmetrical garage offering access to and fro in all weather. Her design struck the perfect balance that the Vana's requested, using innovative PVC and Hardie board to create a traditional board and batted exterior, and interior ship-lapped surfaces. The

**Wide Open Spaces**  
This page: the home is a perfect mixture of old and new. Opposite, clockwise: the kitchen is a welcoming gathering place; the yard is perfect for relaxation; contrasting colors and textures make the kitchen pop; a wide front porch allows for rest and conversation.

cedar rafter tails of the living space are the only wood elements used in construction.

Thomas artfully achieved the Vana's desired open-concept living space by placing a walk-thru butler's pantry at its center, carrying the kitchen's clean navy and white color scheme to the area conveniently accessible from the kitchen, dining area, or family room. The stairway's custom rail replicating the fence of Blair's grandmother's home is among her favorite features of the house.

So far, a chicken coop matching the exterior of the house, and a garden tended by Blair are the family's only foray into farming, but the outdoor fire pit and shooting range promise many happy hours for the family's outdoor lifestyle. With natural light spilling from windows positioned to view the outdoors from almost any angle, the Vana's modern farmhouse invites the outside into every room. They don't have to look far to see the land that first captured their imagination, and know that they are home. ♡

