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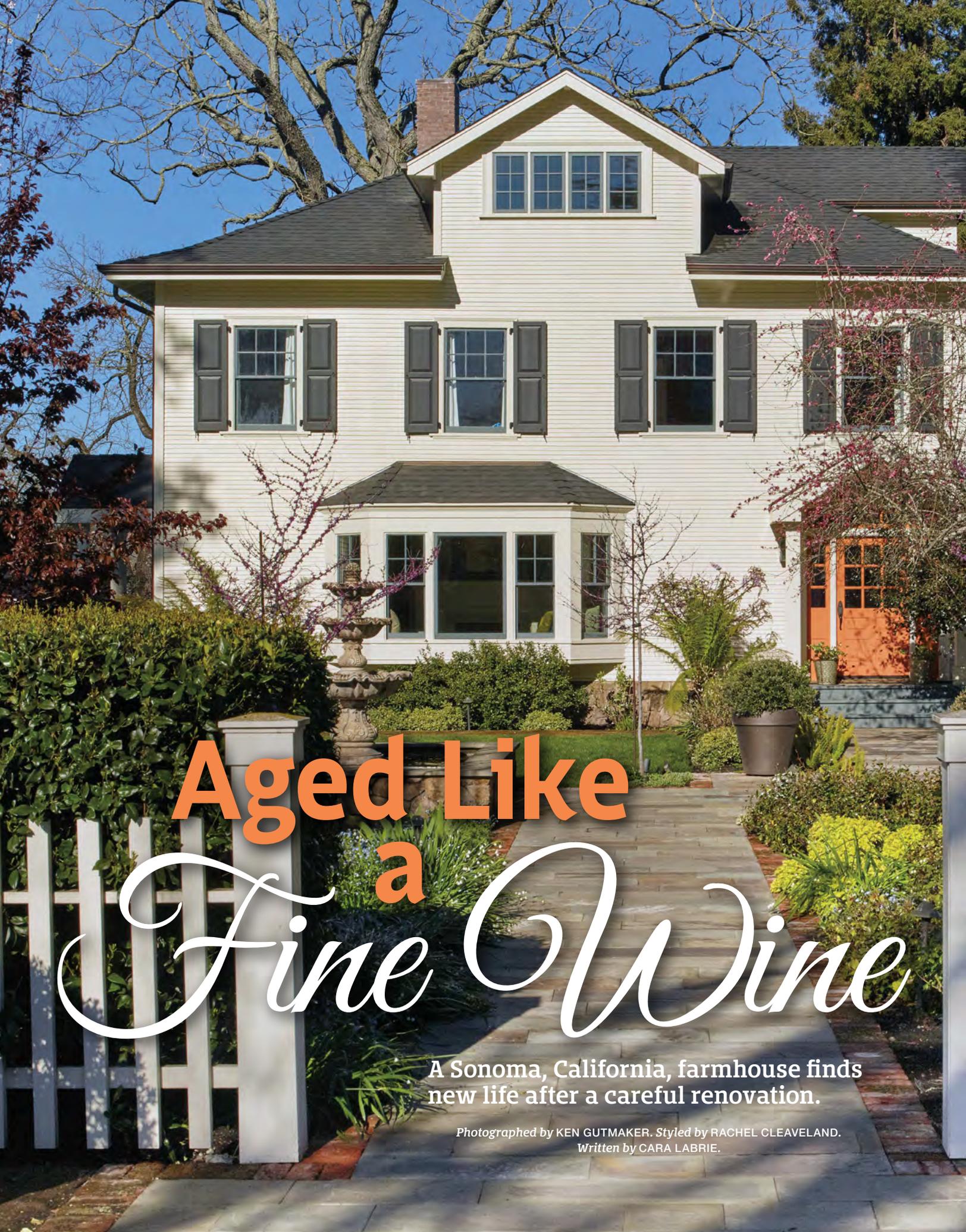
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Aged Like a Fine Wine

A Sonoma, California, farmhouse finds new life after a careful renovation.

Photographed by KEN GUTMAKER. Styled by RACHEL CLEVELAND.
Written by CARA LABRIE.



Selma Blanusá had a new home where everything ran like a finely tuned instrument. But there was something special about that old farmhouse near Sonoma, California, that kept drawing her back. And so her family took on the challenge.

“We were moving from a house where everything worked to an old house where nothing worked,” she says. “I didn’t want life to be difficult. I wanted it to be timeless. Every day is a treasure here now. We feel quite fortunate.”

The family’s new old farmhouse is set on 4.6 acres. The property includes the original 1907 farmhouse in addition to a separate garage as well as facilities for horses, sheep and chickens. During the 10-month renovation, the Blanusas took special care to preserve as much of the character and charm of the home’s original design—down to the size and style of pickets for fencing—while providing modern conveniences like earthquake and wind protection and updated plumbing and electrical.

The result is Selma’s dream come true: a brick-lined walkway, covered porches, a country kitchen and cozy rooms. Selma found photos of the home from previous iterations to give inspiration for everything from designing a new rear porch to selecting the right shutters. In addition, the architectural team repurposed as much material as possible during the project.

For a bit of character, Selma used a diverse palette of muted colors ranging from lemon to cornflower, salmon to mint. She even consulted neighbors when choosing the color for the front door.

“We live on a beautiful, tree-lined walking street,” she says. “I was struggling on choosing the front-door color. I put an easel at the end of my walkway, and I had all the people walking by vote for one of the four colors I was considering. They chose the salmon color.”

And now, after more than 110 years and a significant face-lift, the home still looks timeless.

LEFT: Located on a tree-lined street near Sonoma, California, the farmhouse looks much the same today as it did in 1907. Subtle changes, such as the brick-lined walkway, give a nod to the past, as the bricks are from the original chimney.

TOP: Set on nearly 5 acres in Northern California, Selma Blanusá’s farmhouse underwent a 10-month renovation that included updates to make it earthquake- and wind-resistant.



ABOVE: Much of the original structure of the 1907 farmhouse remains. Additions, such as this rear porch, include features inspired by the original design to keep the aesthetic consistent.

RIGHT: This is a farmhouse that's not afraid of color. Muted hues of orange, green, yellow and blue punctuate the whole house, but they don't take over.

“We didn't pick *colors* that were too strong, but we wanted some *playfulness, too.*”



Choosing a Color

Feeling like taking a plunge in the color wheel, but not sure where to start? Fear not—even a 1907 farmhouse can have fun with color! Homeowner Selma Blanusca consulted the owner of her local paint shop to select the hues for her home.

“I didn’t want to make a mistake on the color,” she says. “We didn’t pick colors that were too strong, but we wanted some playfulness, too.”

Selma used hues of blue, green, yellow and even orange for her farmhouse. Try consulting a color expert at your local hardware or paint store. Buy just a sample size, such as a pint, and then paint a poster board and try it on your wall at various times of the day to see how it reflects (or absorbs) light.



The house’s mudroom used to be a porch. Now enclosed, it’s flooded with light. A bright rug plays off the salmon-hued door and seafoam walls.





OPPOSITE: The kitchen's banquette is the favorite hangout for friends. Seating more than a dozen people, it is the perfect place for a comfortable pizza party.

LEFT: Marble countertops were among the first selections for this farmhouse kitchen. Subtle details like corbels add to the authentic look of the cabinetry.

BELOW: Selma wanted to maintain a timeless feel in the kitchen, so she had cabinets built that looked original to the home—right down to the hardware. The doors are easily removed in case she decides to have open shelving.



Farmhouse Kitchen Conversion

Want to achieve a farmhouse kitchen look—without sacrificing modern conveniences? Simple! It's all about the accents:

- ➔ Architectural details like corbels create a homemade, “just hung” look.
- ➔ Antique-looking hardware can transform a modern cabinet door in a moment.
- ➔ Consider open shelves or glass-front doors to keep necessities in sight.

LEFT: The farmhouse had few rooms, which were mostly small and square-shaped, so Selma added a window seat to provide extra seating and break up the space visually.



ABOVE: This sink is original as well and was part of the home's mudroom. Everyone had to wash their hands when they came in from working the farm.

BELOW: The bathroom still features the original cast-iron bathtub, one of the many original fixtures that's survived more than 110 years.



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The home's master bedroom used to be a sleeping porch. During the extensive remodel, the ceiling was raised to add space as well as architectural interest.



RIGHT: The chickens have plenty of space to roam beyond their coop—4.6 acres, to be exact.

BELOW: Although it looks like a barn, this garage doubles as a studio. The rustic garage doors are fashioned from reclaimed wood.



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fortunate.”





ABOVE: The resident sheep have a pretty comfortable life, but they do some work, too: They keep the property's delicious grass nice and tidy.



LEFT: Sheep, horses and chickens all call the property home.