

# New England HOME

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Issue

*Celebrate!*



# Back to Nature

A Massachusetts home rises in perfect harmony with its restored natural surroundings.

With vertical siding of heat-treated ash and a standing-seam metal roof that holds an array of solar panels, the home is both low-maintenance and energy-efficient. The landscaping plan relies on native materials, including fall-blooming purple New England aster, that attract pollinators.



Text by PAULA M. BODAH | Photography by JARED KUZIA



**ABOVE:** The 2.4-acre property had been clear-cut by previous owners, so the priority for the landscape team and their clients was to rewild the site, bringing it back to nature and merging the lot with the surrounding woods. **LEFT:** The mudroom has an easy-care natural stone floor and a long oak bench with open storage below.

A house that belongs. That was the guiding principle behind a young couple’s vision for their new home on a 2.4-acre lot bordering conservation land. From the first walk-through of the Concord, Massachusetts, property, their goal was clear: restore the site to its native beauty and design a house that felt as though it had always been there.

Architect Kelly Ennis Connellan of Neubauer Ennis Architects immediately connected with the clients’ ethos. “They came to us asking for a modern farmhouse,” she recalls, “but what really excited us was their commitment to sustainability and habitat restoration.”

Ennis Connellan drew inspiration from the vernacular of New England



Black soapstone counters, glass-front cabinets with black metal framing, an expansive island of natural oak, and a sextet of Natalie Page's ceramic funnel pendants complete the contemporary farm-kitchen look. Awning windows at the sink usher in the breeze.



*“QUALITY IS NOT JUST CRAFTSMANSHIP, BUT THE WAY  
A HOME PERFORMS OVER TIME.”—Builder Mark Doughty*

farmsteads and nestled a series of simple volumes into the slope of the land. “We pushed the house deeper into the lot,” she explains, “so it felt quieter, more part of the land.”

A single-story wing holds the kitchen and great room, while four bedrooms, a game room, a gym, and two offices occupy a separate two-story wing. A glassed-in breezeway connects the two parts of the house.

Restoring the land itself was an equally considered process. “It was a blank slate,” says Anna Curtis-Heald, landscape architect with Crowley Cottrell. “The site had been clear-cut years ago, and the new owners were determined to rewild it.”

The landscape team seeded meadows and added plant materials to knit the property back into the adjacent conservation area. “We were creating habitat—bringing back the forest edge, supporting

pollinators and birds. It's not just about beauty but biodiversity," Curtis-Heald says.

Builder Mark Doughty of Thoughtforms says that the couple's clarity of purpose elevated every aspect of the project. "They wanted a home that was healthy, high-performing, and enduring," he says. "That made it easier for everyone to work toward a unified vision."

The house is fully electric and employs dense-packed cellulose and rigid wood-fiber insulation. Its vertical cladding, a thermally treated ash, requires no finish and weathers



**RIGHT:** A fireplace of locally sourced stone is a commanding presence in the living room, where a seating arrangement includes a pair of sculptural Lawson-Fenning Niguel lounge chairs. **BELOW:** Interior designer Meredith Thayer added textural interest to the screened porch with Gloster's Lima dining chairs in wood and wicker and the Cuff Studio twisted-jute pendant light.



naturally. “We think of quality holistically,” Doughty says. “It’s not just craftsmanship, but the way a home performs over time.”

Meredith Thayer brought the same philosophy to the interior design. “They really cared about materials and sustainability,” she says. Natural elements dominate, including the kitchen’s soapstone countertops and oak millwork, and the primary bath’s



**ABOVE:** The homeowners were intent on using natural, earthy materials, such as the durable basalt flooring in the primary bath. **LEFT:** An upholstered headboard, a Steven King carpet, and a bench with a plush linen cushion bring cozy softness to the primary bedroom, located on the second floor.



Vermont Danby marble.

The furnishings reflect the couple’s lifestyle: comfortable, unpretentious, and thoughtfully sourced. Thayer painted all the walls with Benjamin Moore’s soothing White Dove. “It allows the woodwork to sing, and it doesn’t detract from the beautiful landscape,” she says.

Every element of the home is intentional—from the timber-framed structure to the native plantings to the views that frame conservation land like living paintings. “The big story,” says Ennis Connellan, “is how the landscape was brought back, and how the house settles into it so naturally. I’ve always believed a house should feel appropriate



to its site. Here, it does.”

This home isn’t just a place to live—it’s a promise to the land, fulfilled with care and craftsmanship.

**EDITOR’S NOTE:** For details, see Resources.

**ARCHITECTURE:** Neubauer Ennis Architects

**INTERIOR DESIGN:** Thayer Design Studio

**BUILDER:** Thoughtforms

**LANDSCAPE DESIGN:** Crowley Cottrell

The screened porch’s oversize windows look out to the two-story bedroom wing. The ceramic lamp on the teak end table is from Thayer Design Studio.