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DREAM HOMES



See more from Ankeny Architecture and Design, Audrey Drought Design, and Ridgeline Log and Timber on page 64.

SIMPLE GIFTS

STORY ZACHARY BARNETT
PHOTOS MELINDA DUQUETTE

ANKENY ARCHITECTURE AND DESIGN, DROUGHT INTERIORS, AND RIDGELINE TIMBER WORKED TOGETHER TO CREATE A TIMELESS HOME FOR A FAMILY AS WELL AS THE FAMILY'S LARGE ANTIQUE COLLECTION.



Jared Duckstein, president and partner of **Ridgeline Timber Company**, stands in a large tent talking about the aged mortise and tenon holes in a length of reclaimed timber. It's winter, and a large heater blows loudly while two craftsmen trace out a truss configuration on the floor. The beam is weathered and cut with adz marks, but the holes had been cleanly chiseled by bygone artisans. Imagining the joinery of the hand-hewn tenons fitting snugly, one can understand how these barns from the 1800s still stand today.

"This is history," says Duckstein. "See how skillfully these were cut? And check out the density of the rings. This is old-growth white oak, felled in the Midwest centuries ago. Add to that the 150 years it was part of a functioning barn, and you begin to appreciate the craftsmanship involved."

Indeed, skilled European timber framers and furniture makers immigrated to early America, and shared artistry and knowledge in what was, in a sense, a working homage to form and function. Though the markings in reclaimed timber are sometimes referred to as "imperfections," to a craftsman like Duckstein, they are gloriously preserved marvels of a golden era.

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"The magnificence of their collection was that everything subscribed to the tenet of form and function."

Ashley Drought



That these timbers are finding new use can be likened to, when in 1944, the composer Aaron Copland resurrected Elder Joseph Brackett's hymn "Simple Gifts" as the melody for his acclaimed piece, "Appalachian Spring." Suddenly, "Simple Gifts" was revived and found fresh praise.

And so, when architect Shawn Ankeny, founding principal at **Ankeny Architecture and Design**, was approached to create a very particular house, the team enlisted the services of Ridgeline for its reputation as craftsmen and preservationists. The clients, avid antique collectors, had a vision for a home that would both mesh with its outdoor surroundings and meaningfully highlight the beauty

of their collection, which includes both vintage Americana and Native American art.

"The magnificence of their collection was that everything subscribed to the tenet of form and function," says interior designer Audrey Drought of Houston-based **Audrey Drought Design**, who arranged the interior. "Beautifully crafted pieces but also useful to their living arrangement."

Ankeny began imagining a home with a cabin-y feel. "The homeowners preferred wood to sheetrock, so almost everything had to be barnwood and exposed beams," she says. "And though it was a large house, we created a sense of intimacy with cozier, smaller rooms, which jibed with the nature of the



**'Tis the gift to be simple,
'tis the gift to be free
'Tis the gift to come down
where we ought to be,
And when we find
ourselves in the place
just right,
'Twill be in the valley of
love and delight.**

Elder Joseph Brackett,
Maine Shaker Community, 1848



antiques. It was so much fun. They'd call Audrey and me and say, 'Hey, we found this flag commemorating Wyoming's statehood; can you find room for it?' And so we'd reimagine a wall for this huge flag."

Drought's team worked with Ankeny remotely, inventorying the collection and mapping out where each piece would go. When the time came, everything went smoothly. "By then," says Drought, "I could have done it blindfolded."

"When we first came across a Shawn Ankeny-designed house, our thought was, 'Yes, that's a house we could live in,'" say the homeowners. "With this house, we got to start from scratch and do everything just the way we wanted it. Shawn, Audrey, Ridgeline, and the vendors did not disappoint. All their special touches, their correct proportions, their attention to detail—we've been thrilled." ▀