

SOPHISTICATED LIVING

{Louisville's Finest}





PAST FORWARD

Interior designer Weasie Gaines of Bittners spearheads the restoration of the original farmhouse at Ashbourne Farms by respecting its history without being constrained by it.

Written by Bridget Williams / Photography by Andrew Kung

The late Sally Brown would undoubtedly smile if she could see Ashbourne Farms today: the beloved 850-acre family farm she put under conservation easement in 1996 is now 2,250-acres; its agricultural programs are flourishing; its show barn is bustling with the happy sounds of weddings, live music, and special events; it persists in its dedication to hospitality and heritage under the ownership of her grandson Austin Musselman and his wife Janie; and, its original farmhouse is newly renovated and sporting her favorite hue: a cheery, buttery yellow.

The entirety of the property is listed on the National Register of Historic Places. As it continues to evolve as a center for both hospitality and agriculture, so do its facilities. Case-in-point is the restoration and expansion of the once modest yellow farmhouse, whose charming cottage-style façade belies its spacious, high-ceilinged interiors. With original rooms dating back to 1882, the

first order of business was removing an ill-fitting addition in favor of one built by Realm Construction that transitions seamlessly from old to new. The landscape, designed by Jon Carloftis, strikes just the right balance between the fundamental concepts of composition: proportion, order, repetition, and unity.

Interior designer Weasie Gaines of Bittners had access to an enviable collection of family heirlooms and artifacts when outfitting the rustic-chic rooms. This assemblage speaks to the current owners' passions and creates a one-of-a-kind look that massively reduces the carbon footprint created by buying mostly newly made furnishings. In addition, antiques procured from Bittners, including an antique bench in the entry, along with custom-made pieces created by the artisans in the woodworking studio at the design house, such as a handsome and substantial cabinet in the laundry room, are no doubt destined to become part of the family's dowry.



Covered porches at the side and rear of the farmhouse can be accessed via the newly added gathering room. A mix of antiques and new upholstered pieces creates a feeling of casual elegance.



Table lamps created from antique Italian candlesticks mounted on iron bases rest atop a family heirloom in the entry.



An armoire in the laundry room was custom-made by the artisans in the Bittners woodworking shop.



Both the kitchen and laundry room boast a brick floor. The upper cabinets have a bit of bling courtesy of jewelry-inspired malachite knobs from Addison Weeks. Reclaimed wood on the range hood and embossed tiles provide additional visual interest.



On display in the dining room are a pair of watercolor paintings by the farm's previous owner, the late Sally Brown. The hutch is from Bittners and the tulip-shaped chandelier is a Julie Neill Albergo design for Visual Comfort.



Delft blue tiles surrounding the hearth add a touch of antiquity to the newly added gathering room at the rear of the farmhouse.



A bedroom in the original portion of the farmhouse. Both the drapery and headboard utilize "Lexington" linen from Ferrick Mason. The design of the tulip-shaped sconce designed by Julie Neill Alberto for Visual Comfort reappears in the dining room chandelier.



The "Green Room" underneath the show barn was outfitted by Gaines over the span of two weeks utilizing pieces pulled from the Bittners showroom.





Gaines created a personal retreat for Janie Musselman, the farm's co-owner and an accomplished equestrienne, adjacent to the horse barn.



In the library, a contemporary Holly Hunt bench is centered between a pair of antique corner cabinets.



Part of the newly added spaces, windows at the far end of the kitchen provide a vantage point to admire the show barn and the horse barn. In the latter, Gaines created a comfortable gathering spot that can stand up to the wear and tear of equestrian pursuits. Similar to the farmhouse, Gaines selected upholstery and accent pillows that embrace color and patterns drawn from global cultures. Her clever choices imbue both spaces with an of-the-moment aura and perfectly align with the collection of Continental antiques.

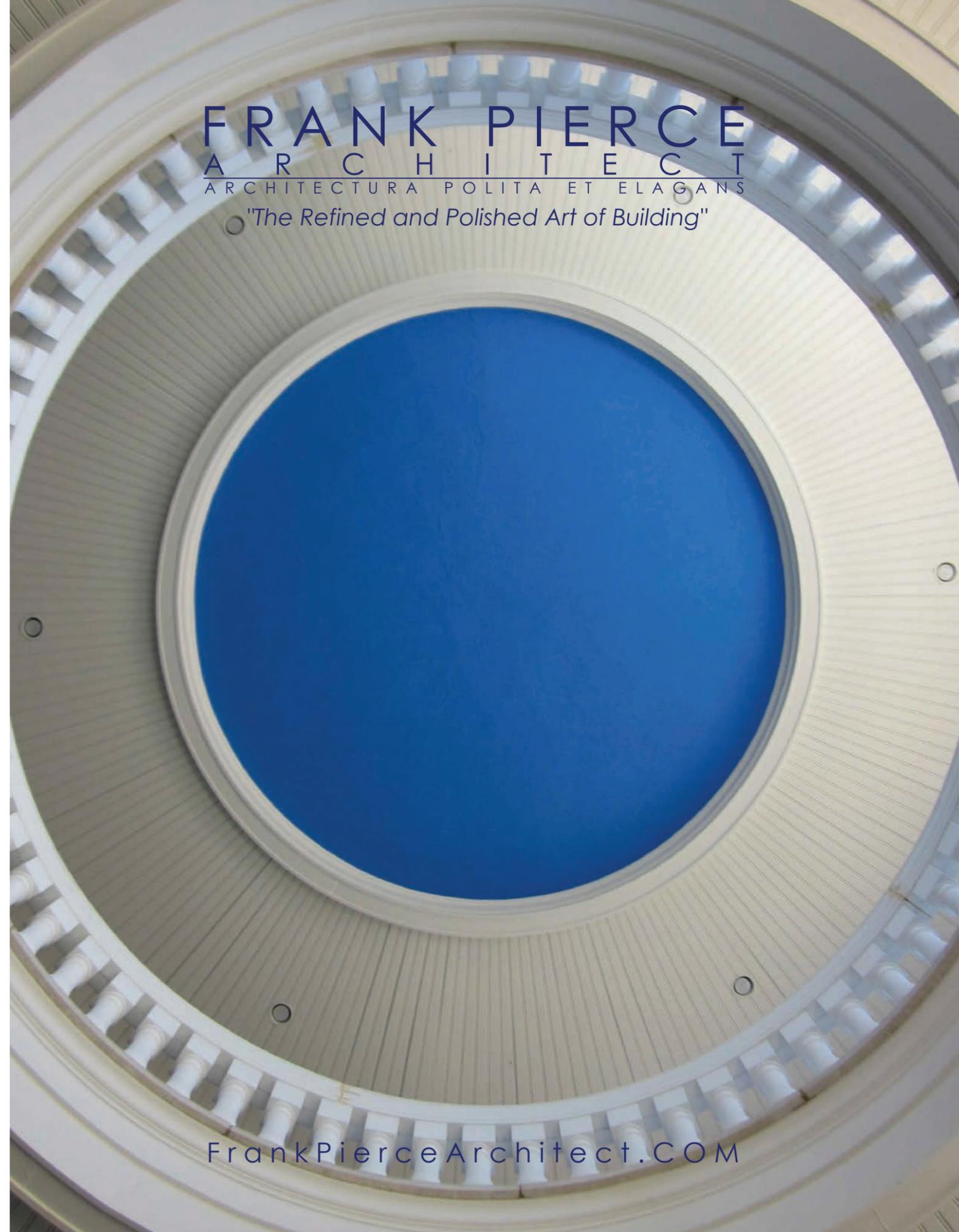
In addition to hosting elegant weddings, the show barn at Ashbourne is quickly gaining notoriety for promoting top-tier bluegrass music, and Gaines was asked to outfit a "Green Room" beneath it in short order. So, in just two weeks, she created a swank space with pieces pulled from the Bittners showroom for both musicians and brides or grooms-to-be to relax before their moment in the spotlight.

Gaines said that the farm's owners love color. Evidence of this is the application of bold peacock blue on the laundry

walls and the lacquered hunter green finish of the kitchen cabinetry, built by Westport Custom Cabinets, that repeats on the library walls.

A contemporary Holly Hunt bench is centered in a window and between a pair of antique corner cabinets in the library. The vignette is one of many subtle instances where Gaines injects touches of modernity to keep the interiors from taking on a museum-like aesthetic. Other examples include a gilt tulip chandelier suspended above the antique table in the dining room and Lucite curtain rods in one of the en suite bedrooms.

An abundance of windows bathes the rooms in light and treats those inside to varying verdant views of the undulating acreage. Thoughtfully furnished outdoor spaces, including a screened side porch and a large covered porch that spans the width of the home at the rear, stand as an open invitation to "sit a spell" while sipping a glass of sweet Southern tea and surveying the serene scene. **sl**



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