



WHERE  
THE  
*Wild*  
THINGS  
ARE

The search for a place two humans and 55 alpacas could call home inspires a country-elegant farmhouse on the prairie.

BY SARAH GOLDBLATT  
PHOTOGRAPHY BY KIMBERLY GAVIN



*Dining Area*  
Sage green and golden brown hues roll from the prairie into the open-concept kitchen and dining room. The handsome backsplash shows off handmade Architectonic tiles from Waterworks, and the hickory flooring, from Reclaimed DesignWorks in Denver, extends through most of the house.

*The Farm*  
Facing page: With names like Protocol, Espresso, and Trousseau, Pamela Ray and Dale Cantwell's alpacas—raised for their award-winning special fleece—seem to enjoy the carefree ranch life in Frederick.



*Breakfast Nook*

The banquette, upholstered in a Romo linen (from Town Studio in the Denver Design District), works well with a custom glass-topped table by local woodworker David Kremer. The playful artwork is by Denver artist Dolan Geiman, and the space is crowned with a clean-lined pendant from Visual Comfort.

*Entry*

Facing page, center: The stately antique Korean chest was a gift from a friend. Its elegance is a beautiful complement to the textured sandstone flooring (Colorado Buff from Arkins Park Stone), which is arranged in a Versailles pattern.



*Living Room*

A silk rug from Matt Camron Rugs & Tapestries anchors a custom leather sofa and sculptural armchair, both by Hancock & Moore. The Stephen Gerould ceramic lamp and the abstract oil painting by John Horejs play off the rug's subtle red tones.

PLENTY OF HOMES ARE designed around gorgeous views, chic entertaining spaces, or even beloved art collections. But this Frederick farmhouse's style has a far quirkier muse: 55 alpacas. Owners Pamela Ray and Dale Cantwell's herd was the impetus for the couple's move from Denver to an expanse of blustery prairie land 30 miles north of the city. There, they built a home—and a life—around the work of raising the gentle camel cousins, whose luxurious fiber is used for making knitted and woven items. "I grew up on a ranch in South Dakota and always loved animals," Pamela says. "Years later, I had a very busy law practice, which I enjoyed, but I always wanted to bring animals back into my life in a way I could build into a second career that was fun and relaxing."

The path to that next chapter began 23 years ago, when Pamela went to an auction with a friend and left with an alpaca. From there, the couple's love for the animals grew along with the size of their herd, and after 16 years of commuting from their Denver



home to a Platteville farm to tend the woolly beasts, Pamela and Dale purchased farmland for their Xanadu Farm. In Frederick, they could nurture the animals and eventually build a homestead of their own. The pair selected the two-acre site on which to build the house—analyzing sun angles and prevailing winds—and then began envisioning how they wanted the home to feel.

"I had this idea of a real ranch house," Pamela says, "that would be simple with lots of stone and

*Kitchen*  
The kitchen cabinets, from Lafayette's Van Matre Construction, are glazed, which "adds a bit of patina and warmth to the space," says designer Laura Abramson of Camellia Interior Design.

### Master Bathroom

Luxurious finishes in the master bath include marble floors and countertops and handmade Architectonic tile (from Waterworks) similar to that used in the kitchen backsplash. The custom hickory vanity, by Van Matre Construction, is a rustic touch, and the sconces from Visual Comfort add refined detail.



### Master Bedroom

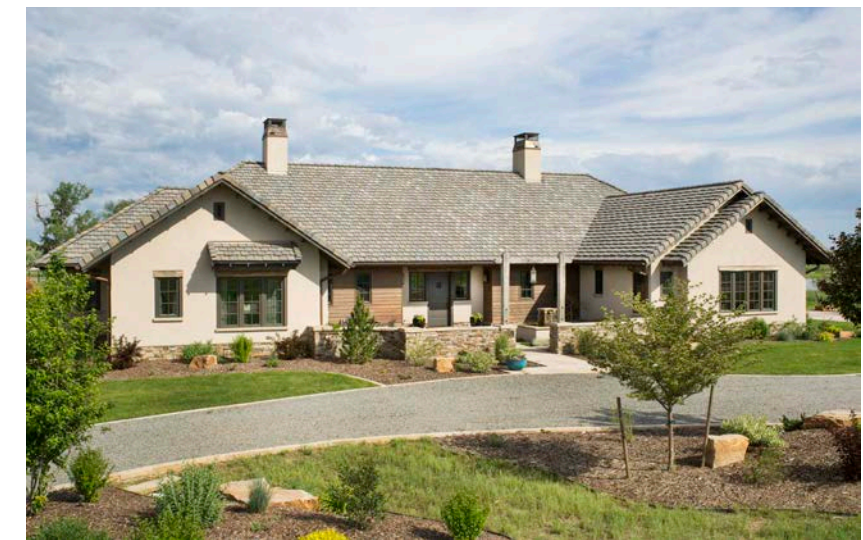
Abramson's selection of an antique German rug and embroidered cotton curtains for the master bedroom contributes to the classic farmhouse feel. The side tables and chest are from Scandinavian Antiques; the bedding ensemble is from the Brass Bed.



natural woods." Their dreams of exposed beams, light-filled rooms, and rustic finishes took form with help from Lafayette contractor Brady Van Matre and Denver architectural designer Kristin Park, who "managed to transform our very vague ideas into something absolutely perfect for the way we live," Pamela says. Although Western ranch houses tend to sprawl, Park employed an efficient H-shaped floor plan within 2,900 square feet. The public spaces are in the middle of the H, while one of the long sides is occupied by Pamela's office (which has views of the pasture and barns), a mudroom, the laundry area, a sunroom, and the garage and the other comprises Dale's office, a guest bedroom, and the master suite.

"The layout establishes a formal entry courtyard that is a mediator between the house and the wild," Park says. "It's a place to pause." Inside, an elongated great room features vaulted whitewashed ceilings and a peaceful, prairie-inspired color palette. Hand-hewn reclaimed beams provide a rustic texture, and recycled hickory flooring adds to the modern ranch-house feel.

Flourishes from designer Laura Abramson of Camellia Interior Design lend the final layer of style and serenity. "It's a place of coming home, just warm and easy," she says. The evidence is everywhere: In the kitchen, a striped linen banquette feels classic and fresh, especially when paired with a custom table by local woodworker David Kremer. A pair of armchairs, upholstered in a floral-and-diamond pattern, make the



sunroom a cozy spot to watch the grazing alpacas. And the master bedroom's antique German rug finds its counterpoint in large-scale embroidered drapes. "The homeowners are practical," Abramson says, "and this home is about what's practical and also beautiful"—a perfect combo for alpacas and humans alike. ■

For information on purchasing raw alpaca fiber or alpaca breeding stock from Pamela and Dale's farm, visit [xanadualpacas.com](http://xanadualpacas.com).

**Exterior**  
The combination of stone, hand-troweled stucco, reclaimed wood, and copper (on the downspouts) establishes a rustic ranch-house vibe. Sheltered by the house and sandstone site walls, the landscaped entry provides a place to enjoy the transition from the surrounding prairie.