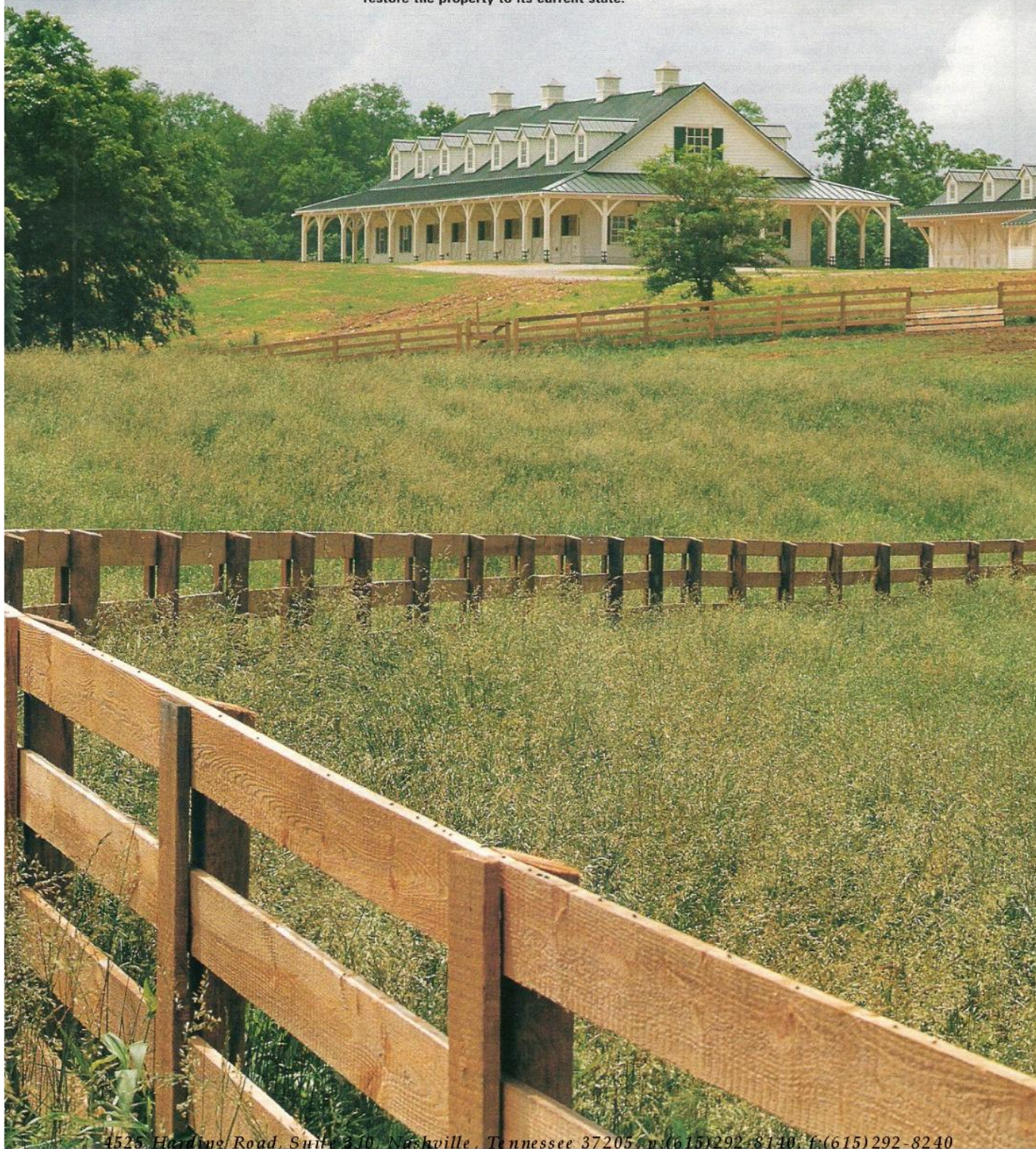


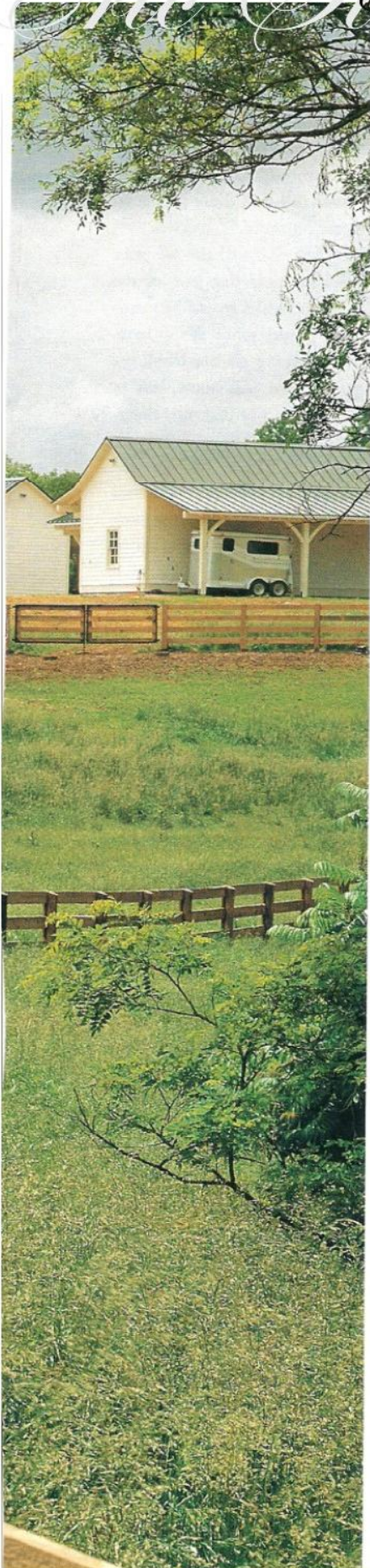
Eric Stengel Architecture

Farm Dream

Post and beam outbuildings grace a growing estate

**The barn and its outbuildings are located in a rural area
on what was once the largest hog farm in the region.
It took nearly a year and a half to
restore the property to its current state.**





The barn, which was created in a traditional farmhouse vernacular, was designed more to human scale than to commercial farm scale.

When Nashville architect Eric Stengel was asked to look at some property a former grammar school classmate and his wife had recently purchased, he was intrigued by what he saw. While the 1,300-acre parcel was largely undeveloped—it was once home to the region's largest hog farm—it still had a barn and several dilapidated cabins on its premises. "It was a very derelict property," Eric says, "in very poor shape."

Despite the obvious renovation that would be needed to make the property into a livable home site, Eric could clearly see that the couple had found a

diamond in the rough.

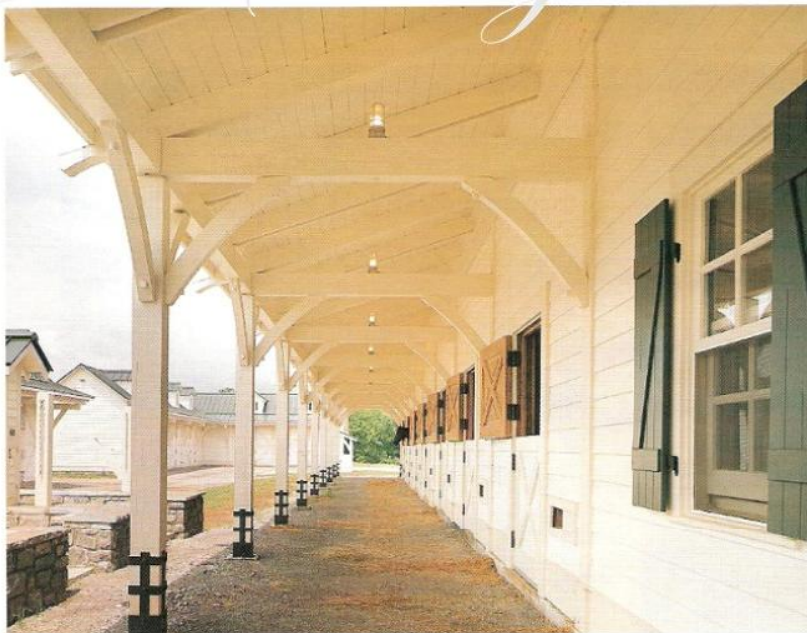
The fact that the property had so much undeveloped land was its main attraction for the couple, since they planned to relocate their horses there. Located in a region known for its rolling hills and sleepy hollows, the property had enough pastureland for grazing horses and, more important, enough wooded areas to engage in the couple's favorite pastime—fox hunting.

Out of Sight

Before the property could be enjoyed for those purposes, though, it

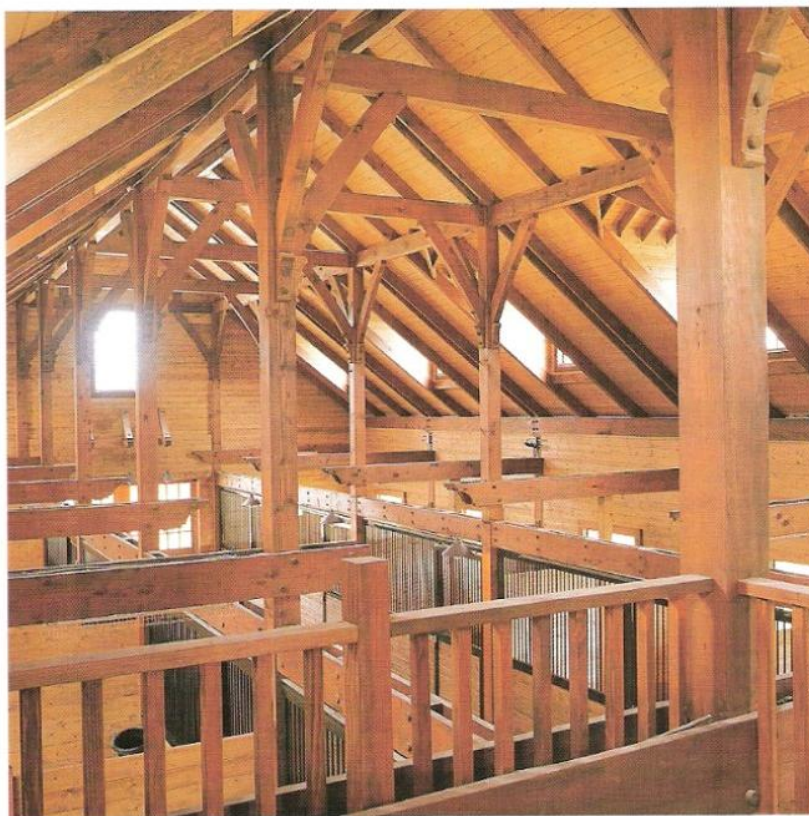
Story by Colleen Morrissey • Photos by Roger Wade • Styled by Debra Grahl

Eric Stengel Architecture



Above: A series of posts and beams carry the weight of the roof with ease and grace, as it protects a walkway located next to the barn.

Below: Soft lighting enters the barn from a trio of open cupolas in the roof as well as from windows located in dormers just above each of the stalls. This design not only allows natural light to flood the space, but has the added benefit of highlighting the barn's elegant framework.



had to be cleaned up. It took nearly a year and a half to reclaim the entire property—including a two-and-a-half-acre, muck-filled pond. With the property restored, Eric says, “You couldn’t even tell that there had been a hog operation there.”

When they discussed the site with Eric, it became clear that one of the couple’s main priorities would be maintaining their privacy while at the farm. That meant keeping all the buildings, including the barn and home, out of sight of a rural highway that runs alongside the property.

After putting their heads together, the couple came up with an ingenious plan to lease the land in the front portion of the property to a local farmer. “After cleaning it all up,” Eric says, “they ended up with about 800 acres of farmable land.” The home and the other farm buildings would then be sited about a mile or so down a gravel driveway where a grove of trees would camouflage their homestead from prying eyes. Anyone driving along the road would see an active farming operation, groves of trees in the distance and little else. “It makes a great disguise for the property,” Eric says. “It looks like a modest farm.”

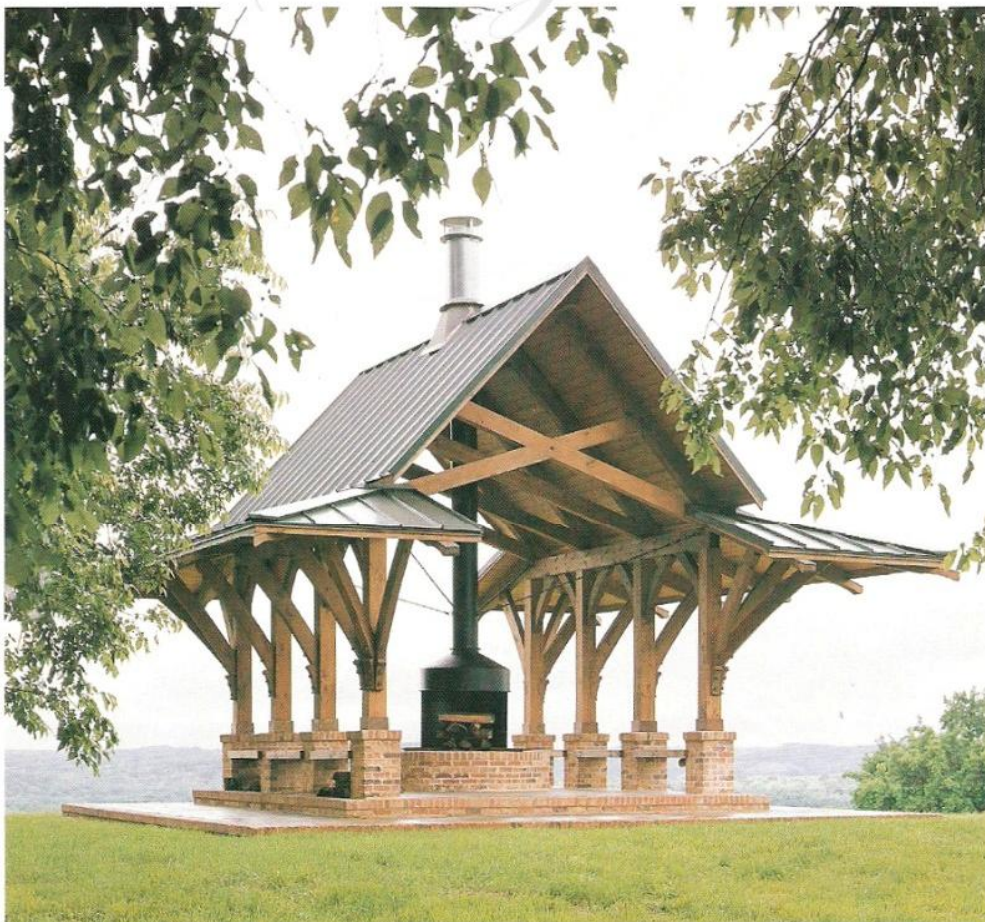
With the sites for the home and barn buildings chosen, the couple next sat down with Eric to discuss the design program for the project. The couple knew one thing for certain: Since most of the buildings would be within sight of one another, they wanted them all to share a similar look. “They wanted all of the buildings to use the same set of materials,” Eric says. This included standing-seam green metal roofs, horizontal lap siding and double-hung windows along with traditional farmhouse details such as cupolas and painted white exteriors edged with black trim.

Since this was to be a homestead and not a commercial farming operation, the couple also asked Eric to design all of the farm buildings (especially the barn) on a smaller scale, not

Eric Sengel Architecture



The barn, which is composed of 16 bays divided into 16 stalls, uses a post-and-beam structure strengthened by metal joinery to support its walls and roof.



Left: The pavilion's wide-roof overhang extends nearly six feet out from the seating areas located adjacent to the hearth. Eight posts with curved knee-braces do an elegant job of supporting the roof above.

to commercial farm scale. "A normal barn door is usually 11 or 12 feet high," Eric says. "The doors we designed are just 10 feet high. Everything is more to human scale, so that it's not overwhelming to be around."

Horses First

While the couple knew they eventually wanted to construct a large home on the site, their first concern was readying a barn for their horses. In addition, other outbuildings would be needed for storing hay and grain as well as parking farm vehicles.

To get an idea of the types of barns other local horse owners had built, Eric took the couple on a tour of several barns in the area. They looked at barns with haylofts and those without. The ones without haylofts appealed to them most. "The barns with haylofts were very dark," Eric says. "Also there is the prevailing wisdom of locating your straw and shavings away from the barn in case of a fire."

A barn without a hayloft has a lot of empty space to fill. The couple remembered seeing articles in building materials

magazines about post-and-beam construction—and knew right away what could be used to fill in all of that empty space.

Eric also thought a post-and-beam structure would be a good solution for filling up the loft since it would not only add character to the interior of the barn, but would make the barn extremely strong as well. Fortunately, Eric knew a company that could provide a dramatic looking, yet strong, frame: Pioneer Log Systems in Kingston Springs, Tennessee. He also knew that builder Skipper Phipps, owner of Phipps Construction in Nashville, would be the best person to handle the construction of the barn and other outbuildings as well.

After the decision to go with post and beam was made, Eric consulted with a structural engineer to determine the size of the 27-foot tall, 16-bay barn's framing members. To ensure the structure's stability,

the engineer recommended that the frame be bolted together with steel pegs. Wooden plugs could then be used to cover the holes to give the structure the look of an authentic timber frame. "Once we had member sizes," Eric says, "I was free to introduce things that weren't essential to the engineering, such as curved kneebraces and decorative through-tenons."

"Everything is more to human scale, so that it's not overwhelming to be around."

Eric Stengel Architecture

Four scissor-style trusses, constructed from Douglas fir, hold up the pavilion's roof. A wood-burning stove, surrounded by redwood benches, takes center stage.



Eric Stengel Architecture

The pavilion overlooks rolling hills and verdant pastureland. Although the couple have to ride by horseback nearly a mile to get to the structure, they and their loved ones use it every chance they get.



The roof, which is composed of simple trusses and double rafters overlaid with spruce tongue-and-groove decking, was outfitted with open cupolas to flood the barn with soft, diffused light from above. Windows located in dormers above each stall also allow natural light in, and have the added benefit of highlighting the barn's elegant framework.

To give the space a warm, authentic look, the couple brought in an interior decorator to help them choose materials and finishes for the barn. Her main influence can be seen in the decision to finish the spruce decking with a lighter stain and give the Douglas fir frame a darker, more distressed look. The lighter wood on the ceiling keeps the interior of the structure light and bright, while the darker finish on the posts and beams gives the frame an aged appearance.

Holiday Folly

A few months after the barn was built, Eric received another call from his former classmate. This time he was asked to design a "folly" for his friend's wife as a Christmas gift. (A folly is an Irish expression referring to a building with no specific function.) Eric proposed a pavilion outfitted with a wood-burning stove, redwood benches and a wide roof to protect against the elements.

The pavilion is larger than it appears. Its total square

footage is 665 feet, with 285 feet under roof. This space is protected by an enormous roof, which extends nearly six feet out from the central portion of the structure. Holding up the roof are four scissor trusses made from Douglas fir. Spruce decking, similar to that found in the barn, finishes off the interior part of the roof. Eight columns embellished with curved kneebraces anchor the structure to a brick patio below. The effect is striking. "When I look at it, it looks like a little parasol to me," Eric says, "because the structure has ribs and braces just like an umbrella would."

The couple is pleased with the result of their collaboration with Eric. They're not done, however. One more project still awaits completion: the construction of the main living residence. After using simple trusses in the barn and scissor trusses in the pavilion, Eric proposed that the ceiling of the great room be topped with another type of truss—one of the crown jewels of post-and-beam construction—the elegant hammerbeam. It seems the best is yet to come. **THI**

RESOURCES

Phipps Construction Co. Inc., (615) 352-5292

Pioneer Log Systems, www.pioneerlogsystems.com, (800) 378-5154

Stengel Architecture, (615) 279-0839