



A TEXAS  
DECORATOR  
FEATHERS  
HER FAMILY'S  
NEST WITH  
RUSTIC AND  
FOUND ITEMS  
THAT ADD  
CHARACTER.

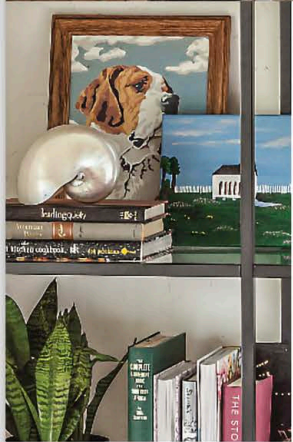
# Country IN THE City

photos by ROBERT M. PEACOCK  
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RURAL ROUTE Sommer Tate, opposite, brought country touches to her home. Hens roost in a backyard coop (with a salvaged door for a homey look) her husband Ryan built. The file cabinet, this photo, was a roadside find. Ryan finished it with a wood frame. It's now a focal point in the sitting room.





**OLD MEETS NEW** "This space best expresses my love of mixing clean, modern furnishings with more decorative or curvaceous older pieces," Sommer says of the living room, top and above. A found coffee table made from an old tree is a conversation-starter.

## SIMPLE MEMORIES

such as jumping over hay bales on her grandparents' ranch and tomatoes picked fresh off the vine have always stayed with Sommer Tate. Even though she and her husband, Ryan, lived the world over during their time in the U.S. Air Force, the high school sweethearts were always eager to return to their native Texas to raise their growing family around the people and traditions they hold dear. They finally found the perfect spot to begin feathering their nest: a tree-shaded half-acre of land within walking distance to the historic town of Grapevine, a Dallas suburb.

The 1940s house the couple chose provides a place where their daughters, ages 6 and 2, can enjoy the "cultural advantages of a metroplex while also raising chickens and growing vegetables and flowers—and appreciate self-sufficient, responsible living," Sommer says. She credits her mother and grandparents with cultivating that mindset. "If something needed fixing, we simply learned how to fix it," she says. The fact that Ryan is handy has been helpful, too. "We make quite a good team," says Sommer, an interior decorator and co-owner (with her design-savvy sister) of Folkway Design & Wares Co.

Two years of decorating their home has resulted in a cool blend of modern pieces, family heirlooms and found treasures. An oversize (and "ridiculously heavy") file cabinet Sommer saw along a highway is one of the prized finds. "I think I left part of my tires on the road when I spotted it," Sommer recalls. Try as she might, her small SUV wouldn't be going anywhere with it, so Ryan came to the rescue with a flatbed truck. The piece, now residing in the sitting room, fits right in with Sommer's overall approach to decorating. "My ultimate goal is to create a home that we all love—a place of creativity, storytelling and beauty, and a place where guests want to linger," Sommer says. "For me, that's true happiness."



**ART SWAP** Sommer props found paintings and prints on the mantel for easy change-ups. Moody colors drew her to the painting dubbed "The Judge." "I always wonder what his story was," she says. The barn-style door to the right of the fireplace adds country flair.





**OPEN MINDED** Sommer replaced a section of upper cabinets with shelves to show off favorite pieces, including a copper double-boiler from a flea market. "With open shelving, use what you love first, then fill in with other finds that have a thread of commonality," she says.

*"Trust your instincts. Buy what you love so your house expresses who you really are."*

—HOMEOWNER SOMMER TATE



**BAR KEEP** "I consider it one of my 'forever' pieces," Sommer says of the \$40 cart, left, from an antiques mall. The vintage porcelain pot with an applied floral design was an \$8 find at a thrift store. The tulip painting, an antiques store bargain, provides an artsy pop of color.

**DINER CLUB** Ryan made the farmhouse-style dining table, above, from reclaimed pine. Spindle-back chairs have a modern vintage look. "Sticking to one design style can make things look stale, so I mix light with dark, vintage with modern," Sommer says.





## Q+A

Here's what's on Sommer's mind as she shops for vintage treasures and builds her design business.

### GUILTY PLEASURE

"I'm always on the lookout for great art. It doesn't have to be anything fancy. I once bought a framed sketch of some geese for \$10 at a sidewalk sale. It's still a favorite."

### LATEST OBSESSION

"Vintage kitchen tools—ice cream scoops, bottle openers and the like. They're beautiful for storing in a crock on the counter and super-functional to use for entertaining."

### ON THE BUCKET LIST

"The Round Top Antiques Fair (in Texas) is practically in my backyard and I haven't made it there yet! I'm going to get there!"

### THE ONE THAT GOT AWAY

"A beautiful vintage chaise lounge with clean lines and a caned bottom. It was in perfect condition. I sure wish I hadn't passed on it. Note to self: If you love it, get it."



**OFFICE HOURS** Sommer's desk, *this photo*, came from an estate sale. On it, a vintage coffee can, *opposite*, nods to New Orleans, where her sister (and business partner) lives. "We both love simple, beautiful things, so each time I look at it, I think of her," Sommer says.



**MASTER CLASS** The iron bed in the master bedroom, *below*, is reminiscent of ones Ryan and Sommer recall from their childhoods. The bedside tables are made with different woods and represent different eras, but work well together because they're the same scale, Sommer says.

**TOPPED OFF** A hat, *right*, that belonged to Sommer's grandfather rests jauntily on a large gilded mirror propped against the wall.



**FARM STRONG** The girls' shared bedroom has a few hallmarks of their parents' upbringing. The Farm Bureau sign that Sommer remembers from her grandparents' ranch hangs above the crib. A well-used beehive box from an antiques mall is repurposed as a storage piece.



*"Spaces are at their best when they're meaningful to you and interesting to guests."*

—HOMEOWNER SOMMER TATE



**SWEET FIND** The antique iron bed, *above*, was a tag sale bargain. "I loved its sweet lines," Sommer says. "I now realize how perfect older beds are for children's rooms because they sit lower to the ground." The quilt is a family heirloom.

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