

Home And Garden » Decorating » Horse Stable Turned Cottage

## Horse Stable Turned Cottage

For Charleston, South Carolina, Designer Missi Ervin and homeowner Sam Cato, renovating a former horse stable and carriage house in Aiken meant returning the historic cottage to its equestrian roots.

[Pin it](#) [g+1](#) [Tweet](#) [Like](#) 968

[Print](#) [Email](#)



Photo: Laurey W. Glenn

### Kitchen

A rustic farm table takes the place of a central island in the kitchen, giving Sam a spot for casual meals.



Photo: Laurey W. Glenn

[Click to Enlarge](#)



### Horse Stable Turned Cottage

Homeowner Sam Cato and designer Missi Ervin used the structure's easy elegance to transform it into a casual

[cottage. > more](#)

Living in a horse stable isn't everyone's cup of tea. But for horsewoman Sam Cato, the draw was irresistible. The house in Aiken, South Carolina, was always one of her favorite spots along the riding trails of Hitchcock Woods. It sat back under the trees on a former estate, a pretty shingle-style cottage that no one would guess had started life as a horse stable and carriage house. Sam knew its pedigree and loved its location.

The house's U-shaped layout and the easy elegance of its weathered, rambling look suited her casual lifestyle with five dogs. Where the carriages used to be stored was a long, open living/dining area. Flanking it were a kitchen and guest rooms on one side and a master suite and office on the other. Best of all, Sam could walk through the back door to reach the horse stalls and saddle up.

Of course, the house was not without its problems; no major improvements had been made since its 1980s conversion. Sam was an old hand at renovation (this was her seventh), so she knew how a project could implode from costly surprises and ran into a big one right away. "Pipes embedded in the old house's cement under the pine floors were leaking and had to be jackhammered out," Sam says. She remembered some European oak flooring she'd spotted two renovations back. "The finish was hand waxed, and the gray tones complemented the weathered shingles outside," she says. The flooring was the start of the mood Sam wanted and a palette for her future decor.

As the renovation gained more momentum, Sam wanted help holding the reins. Reconstituting the interior required everything from new plumbing and electrical plans to a new kitchen and a livable plan for furnishings. She turned to Missi Ervin, a Charleston designer and registered South Carolina architect, who zeroed in on the importance of a moody gray palette. "It's shady and cool for the hot summers and conveys the comfort of a farm, only dressier," says Missi. She sifted through paint samples to find Stony Ground by Farrow & Ball, which would make a seamless whole of the choppy-feeling house.