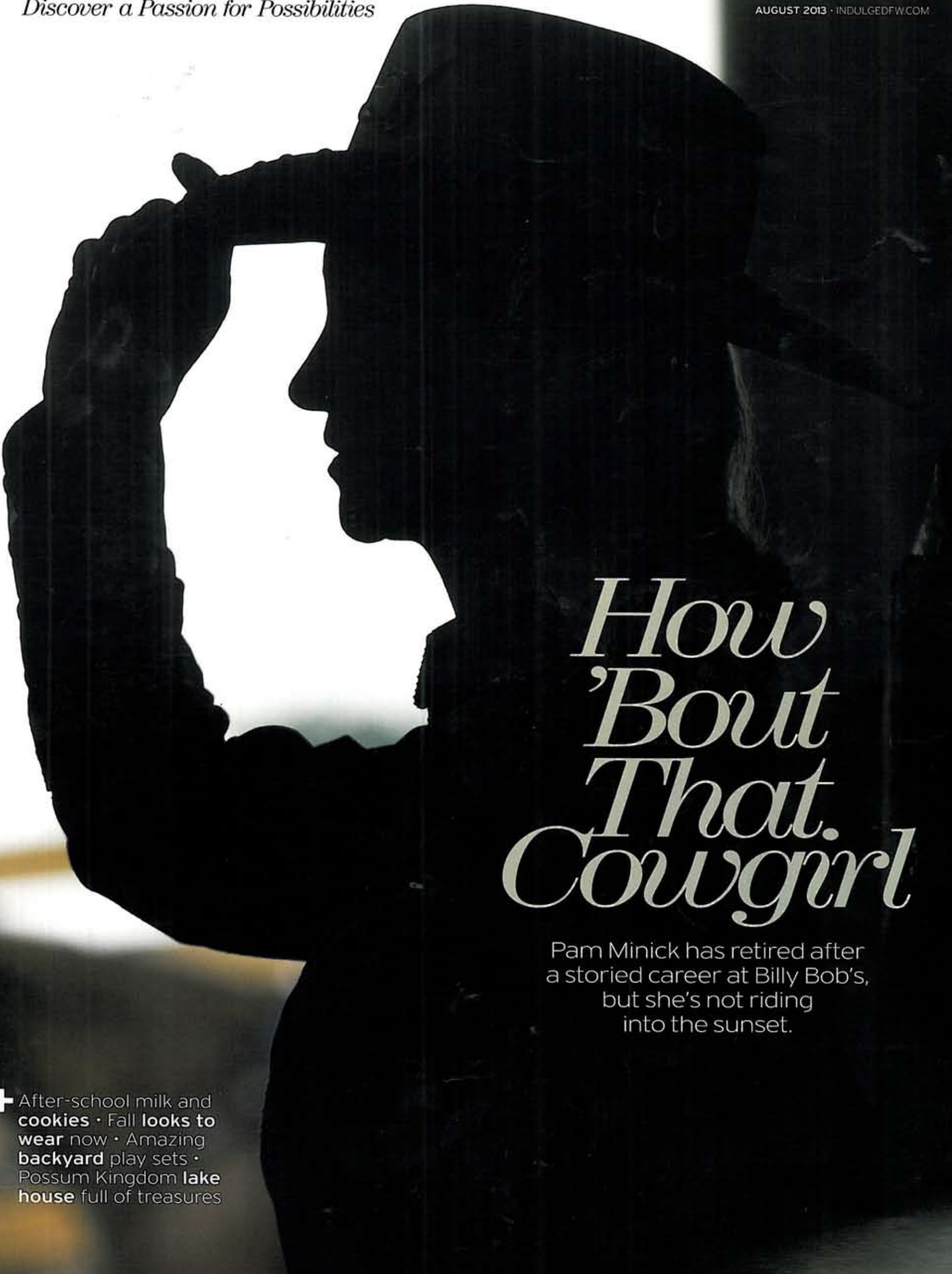


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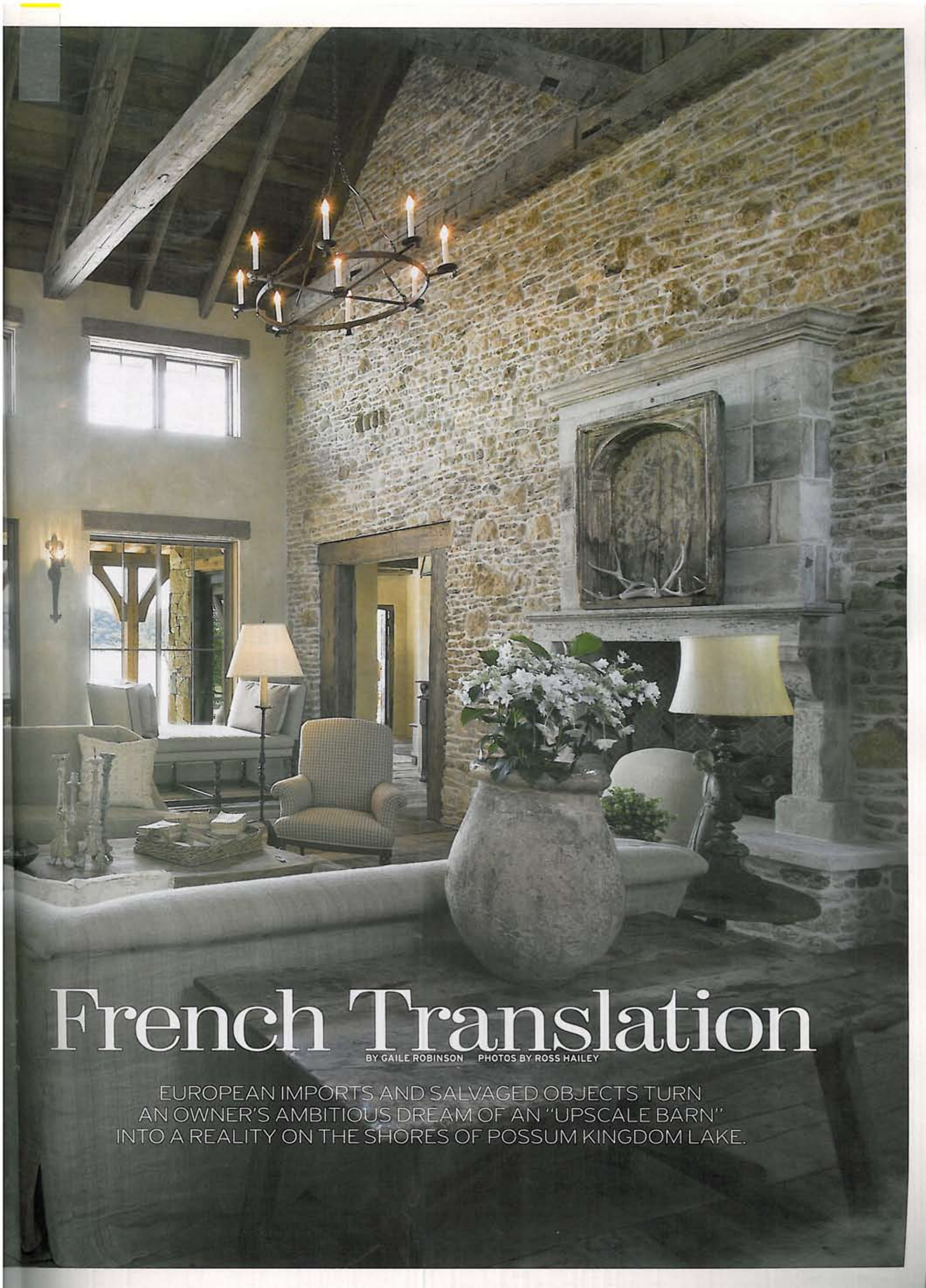


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French Translation

BY GAILE ROBINSON PHOTOS BY ROSS HAILEY

EUROPEAN IMPORTS AND SALVAGED OBJECTS TURN AN OWNER'S AMBITIOUS DREAM OF AN "UPSCALE BARN" INTO A REALITY ON THE SHORES OF POSSUM KINGDOM LAKE.

The serene master bedroom has spectacular views of Possum Kingdom Lake.



Kristy Smith had one directive for her architect: "I told him I wanted the house to look like two barns that were put together. An upscale barn. An upscale French barn." Richard Drummond Davis, her Dallas-based architect, complied. He drew up plans for conjoined French barns on the shores of Possum Kingdom Lake and stepped back to let Smith and her builder, Steve Jackson, finish out the interiors. This was exactly the way Smith wanted it, be-

cause she had a vision. A French vision.

Kristy is enamored of antique European building materials, and she bought them by the 18-wheeler full. She can do that because her husband, Cliff Smith, is in the oil business in Abilene, and he has those big trucks.

So when Kristy wanted crates of 17th-century French rubble for her walls and wood from a French stable for her floors, she knew how to get it from Chateau Domingue in Houston to her building site near Graford.

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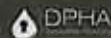
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Kristy Smith's friends refer to the master bathroom as her private bathing chapel. She had the new tub painted burnt sienna to give it a patina of age.

An elegant wooden cabinet in the master bath.



The architectural salvage amassed by Chateau Domingue owner Ruth Gay served as the building blocks Kristy used to finish her home's interiors.

"I just love the age, the history, the patinas and the stories of how they were used," Kristy says. She chose Jackson and his carpenter, Mike Casey, who was known for his work with antique beams, and together they finished the house in 15

months, a quick turnaround for a construction with so many antique materials. "I started buying things for the house as we started building," she says.

"She bought some unique things," says Jackson, who was not deterred by the irregularities of the materials. He tried to source the look of rubble with locally acquired brick but found that while the color could be replicated, the years of exposure had rounded the edges of the rubble and the old stuff just looked better.

So, the semis were sent to Houston. The lodge pole rafters and large beams were repurposed barn wood from



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Canada that had the old mortise and tenon joints. There was nothing regular about those, either. A beam that is 10 inches by 10 inches at one end might be 8 by 9 inches at the other, he says.

The barn wood that was used on the ceiling was installed so the darker, less damaged surface is visible.

The terra-cotta tiles on the ceilings of the guest rooms and the concrete tiles that surround her stove were all also European imports. The kitchen countertops were formerly floors in a cathedral. The 18th-century limestone mantel in the living room once graced a French farmhouse. The massive front door is easily 300 years old, and it, too, came from a French country house.



A concrete tile backsplash and repurposed Italian shutter add charm to the kitchen.



The kitchen as seen from the great room. The table is an old dress-maker's work table, and the cabinet to the left is from an old Italian mercantile store.

The stone countertops were originally flooring from a cathedral, and the cabinet doors are old Italian shutters. The panels behind the sconces are from an old butcher shop.

The stable flooring was quite thick and still covered in the manure of the previous occupants. After the boards were power washed, a portable mill was set up on the property and the long boards were sliced in half. The fresh cuts were laid facedown so the top of the floor boards bear the scars, chips and stains of heavy use.

It's not the most practical of flooring, Kristy admits.

"I won't walk around barefoot; I always wear flip-flops," she says. "But that's OK; we're at the lake. I wanted the look, so I

don't let it deter me."

The cabinets in the kitchen were re-configured French wall stones. The doors are repurposed Italian shutters. The large bull-head panel over the stove is from a French butcher shop; so are the sconces and panels on either side of the sink.

Ruth Gay had those in her own kitchen, and Kristy had always admired them. "Finally, she sold them to me," Kristy says.

She used old factory tables from Vintage Living in Dallas in two of the bathrooms as counters for sinks. The wood



The great room's dramatic ceiling is made of repurposed barn wood.

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The iron banisters and many of the sconces were custom-made for the lake house.



tables tell of years of use — each section shows where a worker stood and wore indentations along the front edge.

There were a few things Kristy had in what she calls her “inventory.” This is not her first building project, nor her first lake house. The couple has had two previous lake houses in East Texas near Tyler, Kristy’s hometown.

This time, Cliff got to choose the location, and he went with Possum Kingdom Lake, where he visited often as a child.

From her previous homes, Kristy had saved two doors that she used in the master bath, and a niche was built in the hallway to the master bedroom to house a wood figure from India that has been with her a long time.

The furniture came from various shops: the sofa from Chateau Domingue; the wing chairs, coffee table and bergers from Vintage Living.

The two large day beds are custom-made replicas of Spanish benches made by Les Antiques in Dallas. The rough linen upholstery, chandelier and window treatments were handled by Salem & Associates in Dallas.

Iron sconces were custom-made by Brown Lighting in Houston. The Italian artwork over the fireplace is from Watkins-Culver Antiques in Houston.

A guest room downstairs has a tile cobble ceiling and flooring from a stable. The shutters are repurposed doors that slide on barn door tracks.

The architect was undeterred by Smith’s desire to use hard-to-find materials for walls and ceilings.

The front stairs feature custom ironwork on the banister.



The chinked log walls in one of the home's many guest rooms are a specialty of the builder.

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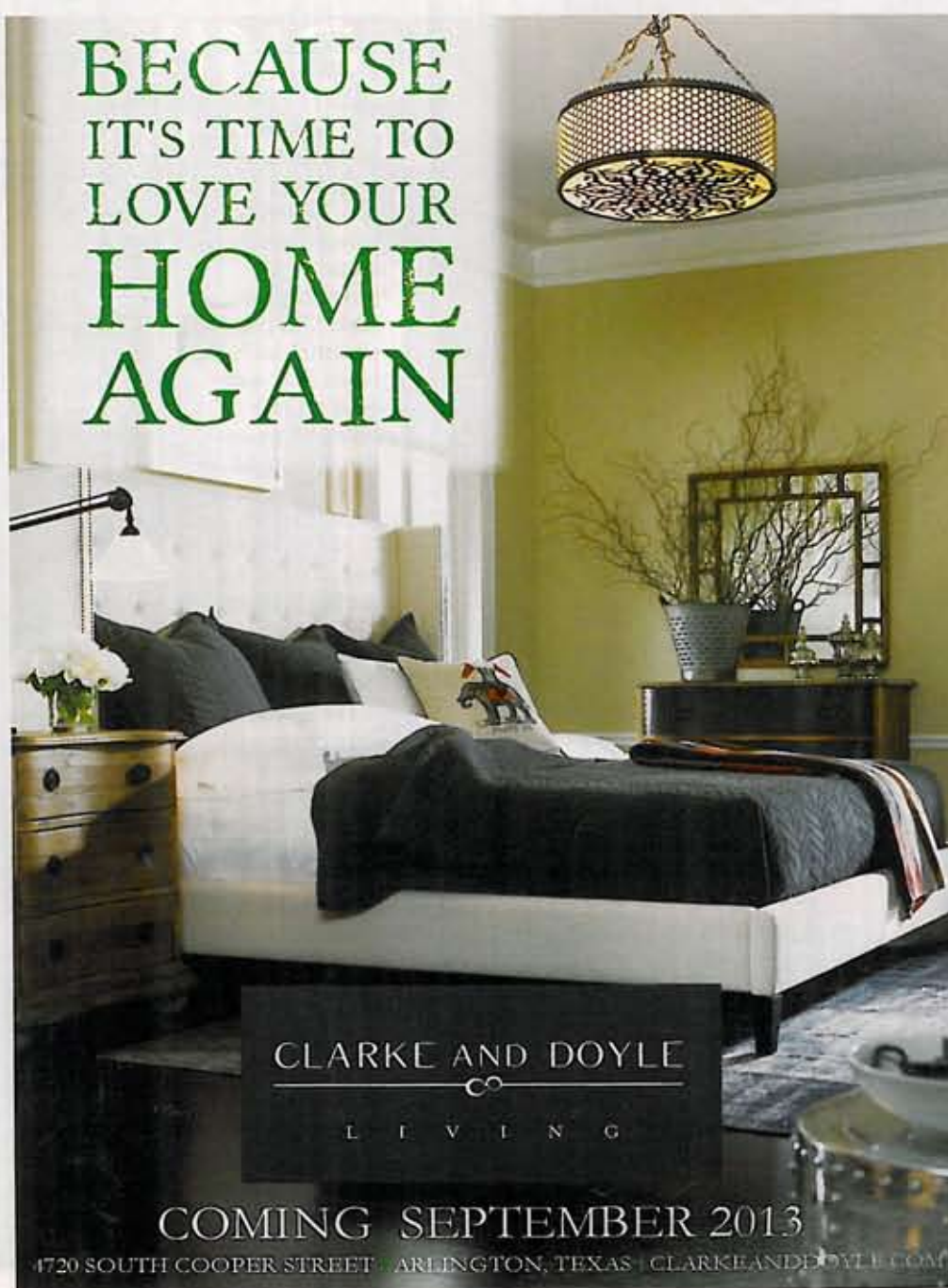
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Kristy Smith with her constant companion, Tater Tot.



With a good eye for the possibilities, Kristy shopped the state to find pieces with Euro-lineage.

A long, narrow barnyard trough she envisioned as a powder-room sink. Old processional lanterns that were held on tall poles by priests, she imagined reconfigured into sconces.

She's never had any formal design training; a brief stint at a Ralph Lauren Home store years ago is the only entry on

her résumé that could suggest her abilities at interior design. Yet she has an unerring eye for color, texture and scale. Her home is a lovely amalgamation of old, older and new pieces that do not broadcast their more recent acquired-by date.

She's well under way on her next project, a house in Dallas. And with a home in Abilene, and now another in Dallas, the Possum Kingdom property is on the market with RE/MAX Possum Kingdom. Parting with all her hard work is difficult, she says.

"I love this house, and if I could just pick it up and take it with me, I'd be so happy," she says.

The realities of time and distance hinder the Smiths' ability to get to the lake as often as they used to, so she had to choose: a new project in Dallas or one that is done.

She chose the challenge.



The loft room, with great views of the lake, is a secluded retreat that beckons at nap time.

In the hallway to the master bedroom is a niche the home owner had made to house a carved figure from India.

The sink counter in a guest bathroom was originally a factory workbench. The front edge shows signs of many years of labor.



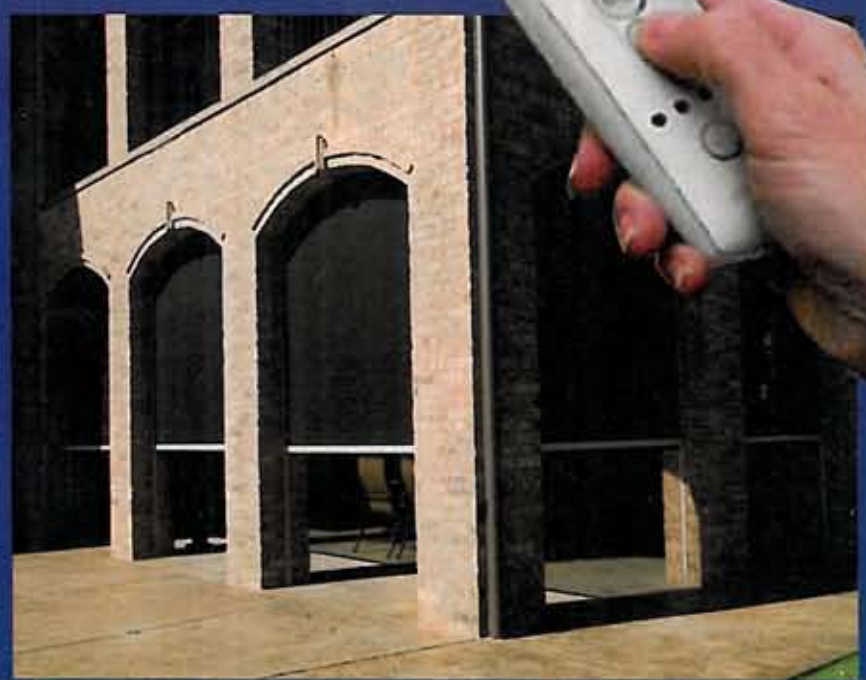
Kristy Smith asked her architect for a house that looked like two French barns.

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