



DOVER LIVING

A private monthly publication created exclusively for the residents of Dover



ANDY RITZER

BRINGS VERMONT BARN-STYLE LIVING TO DOVER

Photo provided by Jill Hayward/Jill Hayward Photography

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Last March 2020, Dover resident Ted Gramer, CEO of a Boston technology company and partner at Natureworks Landscape Services, stopped commuting to his office. Instead, he joined his wife Missy, their daughter, and twin sons...all at home, all on Zoom, and all adjusting to life during a pandemic.

“The space above the garage started looking pretty good,” says Ted. The second floor of the three-car structure had been framed but never finished. Ted envisioned a 1,000-sq.-ft. private office by day and a place where the family could gather at night to watch movies, play pool, and be out of the house.

“I started thinking about a Vermont barn style right away,” says Ted. The family owns another home in Vermont. A woodsy, rustic feel for the new space would tap into memories of mountain vacations and time well spent.

Ted decided to enlist Andy Ritzer, his friend and Dover neighbor for the last 20 years, to run the project. Like so many, Andy was also adjusting to life with COVID-19.

For 30 years, Andy’s professional life was building International Concierge Associates (ICA). As managing director and relationship manager, ICA is a unique business model that brings together concierge staff from Boston’s top-tier hotels with restaurant and nightclub owners, tour operators, and other vendors to deliver unrivaled guest services.

Then, COVID-19 happened. So, Andy started turning to the other half of his professional life. Andy owns Thunder Road Renovations and AJR Real Estate Holdings LLC.



Andy Ritzer; photo provided by Jill Hayward/Jill Hayward Photography.

“When I walk into a new property, I start seeing what it could be,” he says, “I might want to move the staircases, open up the kitchen, or add a multi-level deck...” Much like Andy’s concierge enterprise, the success of his real estate business and house flipping is largely due to his ability to build strong networks.

“New England has a lot of highly skilled tradespeople and craftsmen. Electricians, plasterers, carpenters...you just have to know who they are and what kind of jobs they’re best at. I have multiple electricians and plumbers who are all excellent, but I usually know right away which one is the best fit for the job at hand.”

For Ted and Missy Gramer’s project, Andy brought in various tradespeople to assist with this renovation. The finish work, he and Ted did themselves. “We searched barns and salvage yards from Vermont and back for reclaimed wood that gave us the right mix of widths, texture, and coloration,” says Andy.

For a wall feature, they chose old corrugated rusted metal roofing that came from a century-old barn. It gives the space a warm, rustic vibe and camouflages un-barn-like necessities, like the hidden mini-fridge in the wall.



Coat rack made from old railroad spikes and train track plate; photo provided by Jill Hayward/Jill Hayward Photography.



Floating light fixture made from a 6-foot section of an old 6” x 6” beam; photo provided by Jill Hayward/Jill Hayward Photography.



Missy and Ted Gramer at ease in their VT barn-inspired space.



Sliding door made of reclaimed wood; photo provided by Jill Hayward/Jill Hayward Photography.



Make yourself comfortable!



A warm and cozy space at night; the light fixture is made from a metal chicken feeder.

It took just eight weeks to go from raw space to a spacious home office/family room. And while you can call it “finished,” the two friends are still adding touches. A 6-foot section of an old 6” x 6” beam is now a floating light fixture over the pool table. Old railroad spikes and train track plates are now a sturdy coat rack. A metal chicken feeder was flipped upside down and transformed into a unique light fixture.

At a time when we all need to find new ways to re-purpose our space, leverage our skills, and shift how we connect with each other, it’s a beautiful example of what you can make happen.



Do you have a unique living space you’d like to share? A special game room? Your indoor oasis? Man cave? Email Mark at Mark.Walter@N2pub.com.