

keeping it REAL

Ron Galotti, a longtime member of the *Country Living* family, brought his life full circle, planting himself and his family in the countryside he loves and living the dream he helped create.

PHOTOGRAPHY BY KEITH SCOTT MORTON PRODUCED BY ROBIN LONG MAYER WRITTEN BY JULIA SZABO



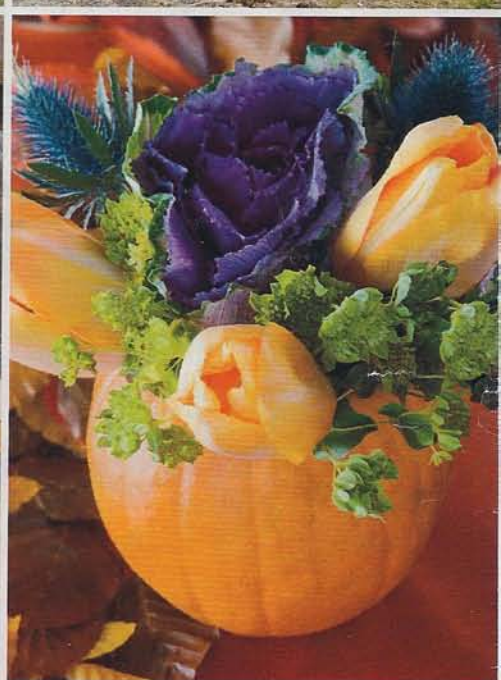


scratch an urbanite

and you'll find someone who yearns to trade tailored suits for Wellington boots and draw sustenance—both physical and spiritual—from the land. So it was for *Country Living's* former publisher, Ron Galotti, embodiment of the dapper, Ferrari-driving Manhattan bachelor upon whom Mr. Big of *Sex and the City* was based. Four years ago, Ron said good-bye to all that and made a full-time commitment to the countryside that first inspired him, back in 1978, to join a magazine that would celebrate the country way of life, with an accent on (in Ron's words) "real country living." Today he lives year-round in North Pomfret, Vermont, with his wife, Lisa Wilcox Galotti, a skiing coach at Killington Mountain School and onetime U.S. national downhill champion racer, and their 8-year-old daughter, Abbi. The family's homestead is a 100-acre farm that Ron works himself: His daily activities include baling hay, spreading manure, splitting logs for firewood, shoeing the horses, and plowing snow. In addition to overseeing a gut renovation of the property's 18th-century house, Ron is also renewing the land on which it stands, bringing it back from fallow forest to fertile pasture (it hadn't been farmed since the late 1960s). His corner office is a 6,000-square-foot barn he designed. And instead of putting out fires in the fast-paced publishing world, he's on call 24-7 as a volunteer firefighter with his local engine company, the North Pomfret Fire Squad. "For me, it's just about doing something for the community," says the former city slicker who's achieved his career high: acceptance by his country neighbors.

OPPOSITE, TOP LEFT: Ron designed the three-story, post-and-beam barn, which was built by local contractor Rick Tobiason; it's home to four horses, including Denver, a Morgan (top right). TOP LEFT: The steel roof on the garage is Vermont's signature color, green. LEFT: The property came with a stone "Clifford" wall. "Pete Clifford is a well-known mason in this area," Ron explains, "and people don't want to see those walls torn down. The stonework we did in and around the house matches that wall." OPPOSITE, BOTTOM LEFT: That includes the Vermont fireplace in the living room. BOTTOM RIGHT: The industrial-strength kitchen features a stainless-steel restaurant prep table and a Vulcan stove. PILLOWS: ANKASA. THROWS: ARMAND DIRADOURIAN. SEE SHOPPING GUIDE FOR DETAILS.

Hear Ron Galotti talk about his life in the country at countryliving.com/galotti.





THE BEAMS. original to the c. 1790 house, were exposed during a yearlong renovation by Colby & Tobiason of nearby Woodstock. "Working with Rick Tobiason was the greatest experience," Ron says.

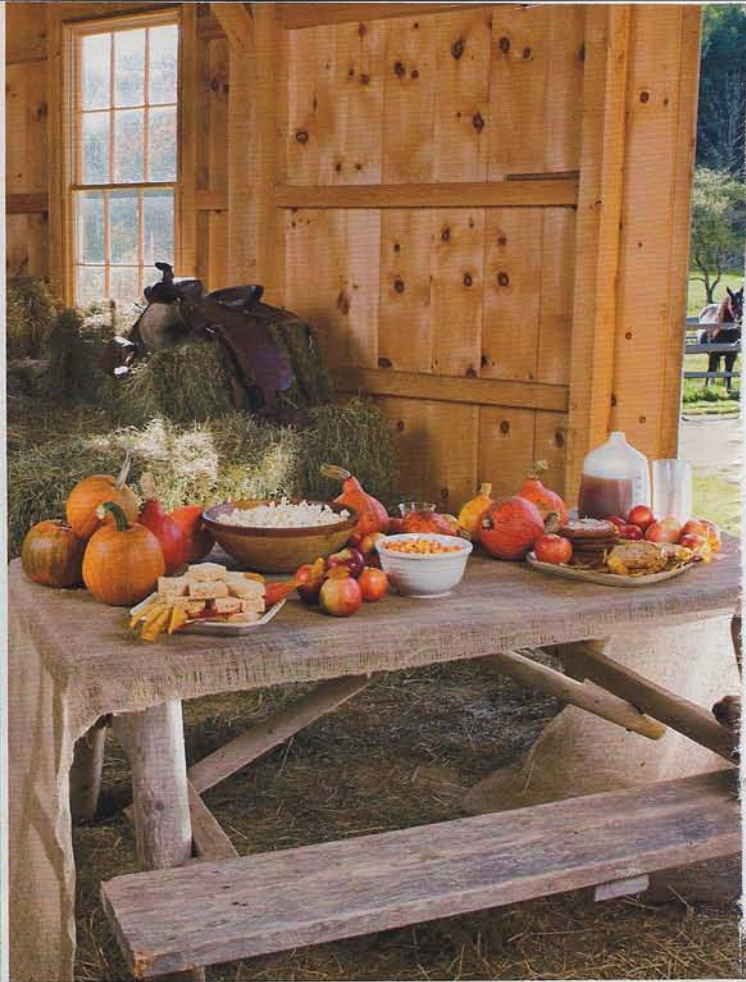


FOR THE FLOORS "We purchased reclaimed wood," Ron says, so the planks vary by type of timber, with maple, beech, and pine in the mix. "It's neat to walk on this floor with your bare feet—it's curvy and lumpy, with a lot of character."



THE HANDIWORK of Vermont artisans graces the dining room on festive occasions: goblets are by Simon Pearce of Quechee, and the vases and dishes are by Miranda Thomas of Bridgewater. LINENS: YVES DELORME.





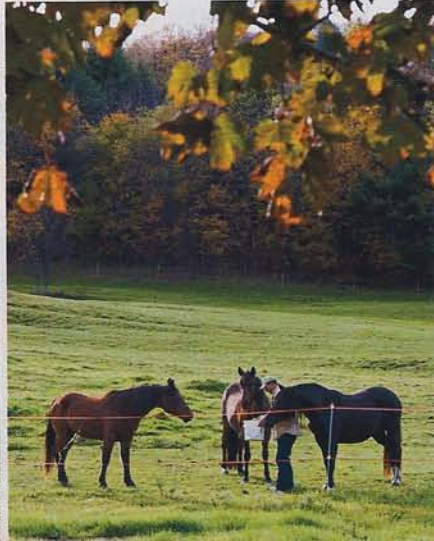
each day is complete

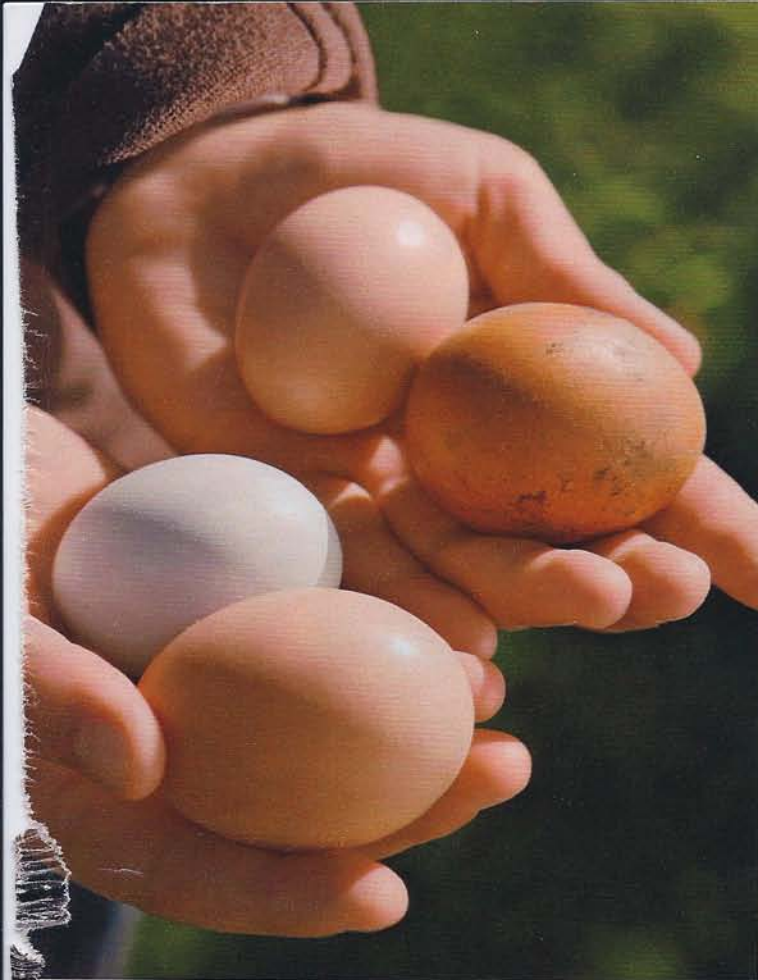
THE MOST REWARDING WORK

Farming is hard work, with new challenges arising every day. "This lifestyle is not for everybody," Ron allows. But it suits him fine: "Up here, a tractor is like your laptop—it's the universal tool of the farm." Ron enjoys stopping on the tractor to watch the sunset. "It's spectacular—peaceful and beautiful. It's a quiet, enriching kind of thing." Come winter, the snowplow gets a lot of mileage; Ron uses it to create toboggan lanes for himself and his daughter to navigate at top speed. "It's a blessing to be able to spend time with my daughter and watch her grow up," he says.

FRUITS OF THE LAND

The barn took six months to complete and is a splendid setting for casual entertaining, including an autumn cider party (above right and below left), where Abbi and her friends enjoy bobbing for apples picked on the property. Over at the house, Ron and Lisa entertain once a week, with Ron roasting local farm-raised pork (he raises pigs with a neighbor) and serving it with a side of "whatever's in season" from their vegetable garden, which offers "broccoli, zucchini, beets, snow peas, carrots, radishes both long and short, peppers of all kinds, plus basil and every herb you can think of."





each season is full

CRITTERS GREAT AND SMALL

An equestrian since age 9, Ron feeds a snack of oats to three of his four horses (opposite below): Denver, Rajah, Beauty, and Buddy. Lisa and Ron gallop with Denver and Rajah (above), and relax with Denver and Beauty (below). Also residing on the property are two dogs, Cody, a Shiba Inu, and Ruby, a "Vermont mutt" adopted from the local animal shelter, the Lucy MacKenzie Humane Society. Thanks to the resident chickens, there's no shortage of eggs; they produce about 70 per week. Budding entrepreneur Abbi sells them at school twice weekly for \$1.25 a dozen.

FRIENDS AND NEIGHBORS

"New Englanders are not readily open to newcomers," Ron says. "It takes time to earn people's trust and become part of the community." He is proud to say he's done both. "I trade hay for lamb with neighbors who own a sheep farm. It's neat that people exchange a lot of things up here. So if you come to dinner, I might rotisserie a leg of lamb rolled with a paste of cumin, marjoram, coriander, and olive oil, and trade with my neighbor the cheese farmer for goat-milk yogurt, then mix that with fresh mint and cucumber to complement the hot lamb paste. But I can also make you lasagna!"

