

03 Modern Farmhouse

Design Handbook 2026

Modern Farmhouse is evolving from cohesive, classic comfort into a resilient, grounded and nurturing style. The style reimagines rustic warmth to include resource-smart, inclusive layouts and intuitive modern conveniences, creating homes that foster resilience across generations.



Meet your team of experts

Guided by leading experts in architecture, design, lifestyle and global trend forecasting, this handbook draws on deep experience and distinct perspectives in creating homes that are thoughtful, relevant and future-focused.



Neale Whitaker
Interior Design Expert

Neale is a renowned Australian design expert recognised for his thoughtful approach to residential architecture and interior home design.



Justin Logan
Architect/Founder, OBI Office

Justin's residential architecture is recognised for creating connection, wellbeing and a strong relationship between interior and exterior spaces.



Rebecca Caratti
Editor-in-Chief, VOGUE Living

Rebecca leads Vogue Living, recognised globally for its design authority, creative and cultural reach and rigorous curation.



Jenny Li
Trend Specialist, WGSN

Jenny analyses global data and trends shaping design, lifestyle and consumer behaviour and contributes as a researcher and writer for WGSN content.



Matt Leacy
Creative Director, Landart

Through Landart, Matt designs landscapes connecting nature and architecture, creating outdoor spaces that restore and inspire.

Cover
Iconic dual pavilions, characteristic of Modern Farmhouse architecture, are joined by a breezeway in a contrasting cladding style to define the forms, while stone and timber accents bring natural warmth.

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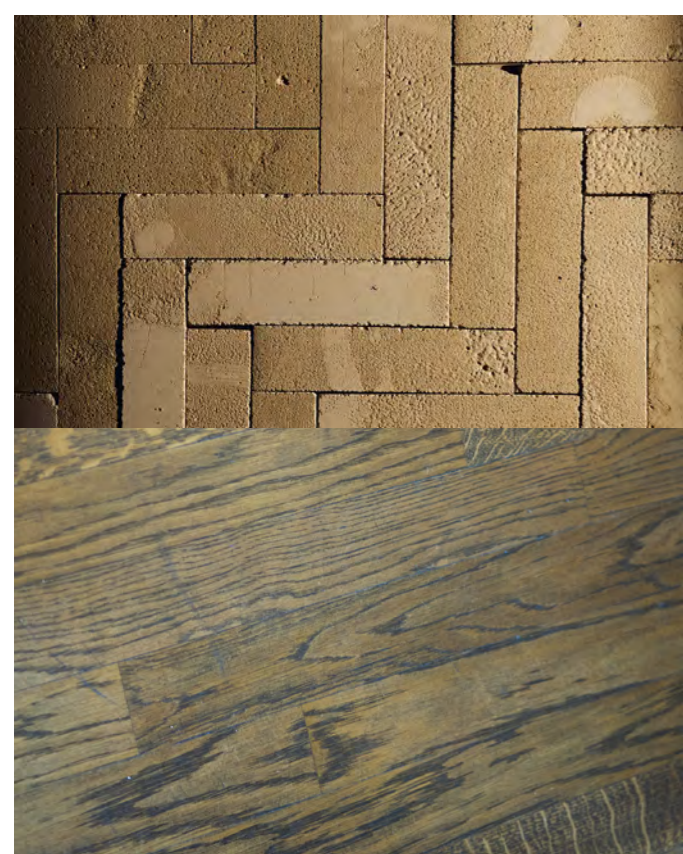


Lifestyle themes

Grounded in resilient, nurturing and multigenerational rural living, the Modern Farmhouse home supports the practical and emotional rhythms of contemporary life—balancing rustic warmth with resource-smart adaptability, durable comfort and intuitive, connected daily living across generations.

01—Evolved Living

Modern Farmhouse grounds resilience in rural-inspired layouts and robust materials, delivering comfort and resource-smart living across generations.



Milan Design Week photography by Paul Barbera.



02—Creative Living

Celebrating grounded creativity, Modern Farmhouse layers rustic forms with adaptable, expressive elements. It invites storytelling through design, turning nurturing homes into canvases of resilience and imagination.

House 16 by Three Birds Renovations.

03—Multigenerational living

Rural charm is reimagined with separate dwellings and shared verandas, fostering independence and connection under one roof. The design balances connection and autonomy, allowing everyone to share resources while maintaining independence and privacy.



04—Autonomous Living

In the Modern Farmhouse, Autonomous Living is expressed through resilience and self-sufficiency. Durable materials, passive design and smart automation support independent, multigenerational living, creating nurturing homes that operate efficiently with minimal intervention and long-term comfort.

House 16 by Three Birds Renovations.



Resilient, grounded & nurturing



Multiple connected spaces create privacy and independence for everyone, while simple, refined forms keep the home efficient and easy to live in. The Modern Farmhouse blends traditional charm with smart, contemporary features that make shared living feel comfortable, flexible and beautifully balanced.

Modern Farmhouse is a hybrid style that balances rustic familiarity with resilient design, offering a model for shared, independent living. Multiple generations and diverse purposes converge in a home that is both grounded in charm and independence. This look celebrates a grounded yet contemporary take on the farmhouse, where warm rusticity is balanced with purposeful calm. Natural light, earthen tones and textural surfaces invite connection—both with nature and with each other—bringing rural charm into the present with updated intention. It’s a design that fosters joy, emotional and creative fulfilment, offering fluid, expressive spaces that adapt to modern life while feeling timeless.

Open, pavilion-style layouts typically all on one single level offer ease and accessibility and support natural ventilation and flow between communal and private spaces.

Durable materials and thoughtful details help ensure lasting performance and ease of care, making the home resource-smart and resilient.

Grounded hues of biscuit reds, deep greens and weathered taupe define a natural, rural vernacular. Textures and chunky forms convey simplicity and craftsmanship. Warm wood and soft surfaces balance calm with raw functionality, while expressive edges and grain-rich details celebrate enduring imperfection and the home’s surrounding nature. The result is a farmhouse that feels both timeless and modern.



- 1 The central alfresco dining sits between pavilions at the rear of the home, lined with contrast cladding and accented by brushed brass trim and planting that integrates the home seamlessly into the landscape.
- 2 Stria™ Cladding Fine Texture 325mm with Hardie™ Axent™ Trim reimagines board and batten in a warm, earthy tone for 2026, paired with Axon™ Cladding 133mm Smooth to add depth and a clean, contemporary counterpoint to this crafted aesthetic.



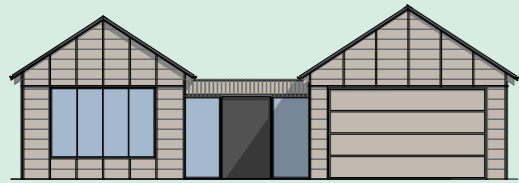
Floorplan

This plan blends retreat living with weekday practicality. Designed for professionals and families seeking connection to nature, space and flexibility, it's the perfectly refined yet welcoming, rural-inspired home.



From Justin:

'Modern Farmhouse living is all about warmth and ease—familiar gables, honest, handcrafted materials and intimate, connected spaces.'



The brief

Site & location context

Stirling, SA. Slightly wide and shallow block (~50–100m frontage) on the fringe of the Adelaide Hills. Cool, temperate climate.

Homeowner profile

Senior professionals with family and flexibility to commute and work remotely, wanting retreat living.

Intended use

Holiday / retirement residence with room for guests.

The layout

4 bed | 3 bath | 2 car

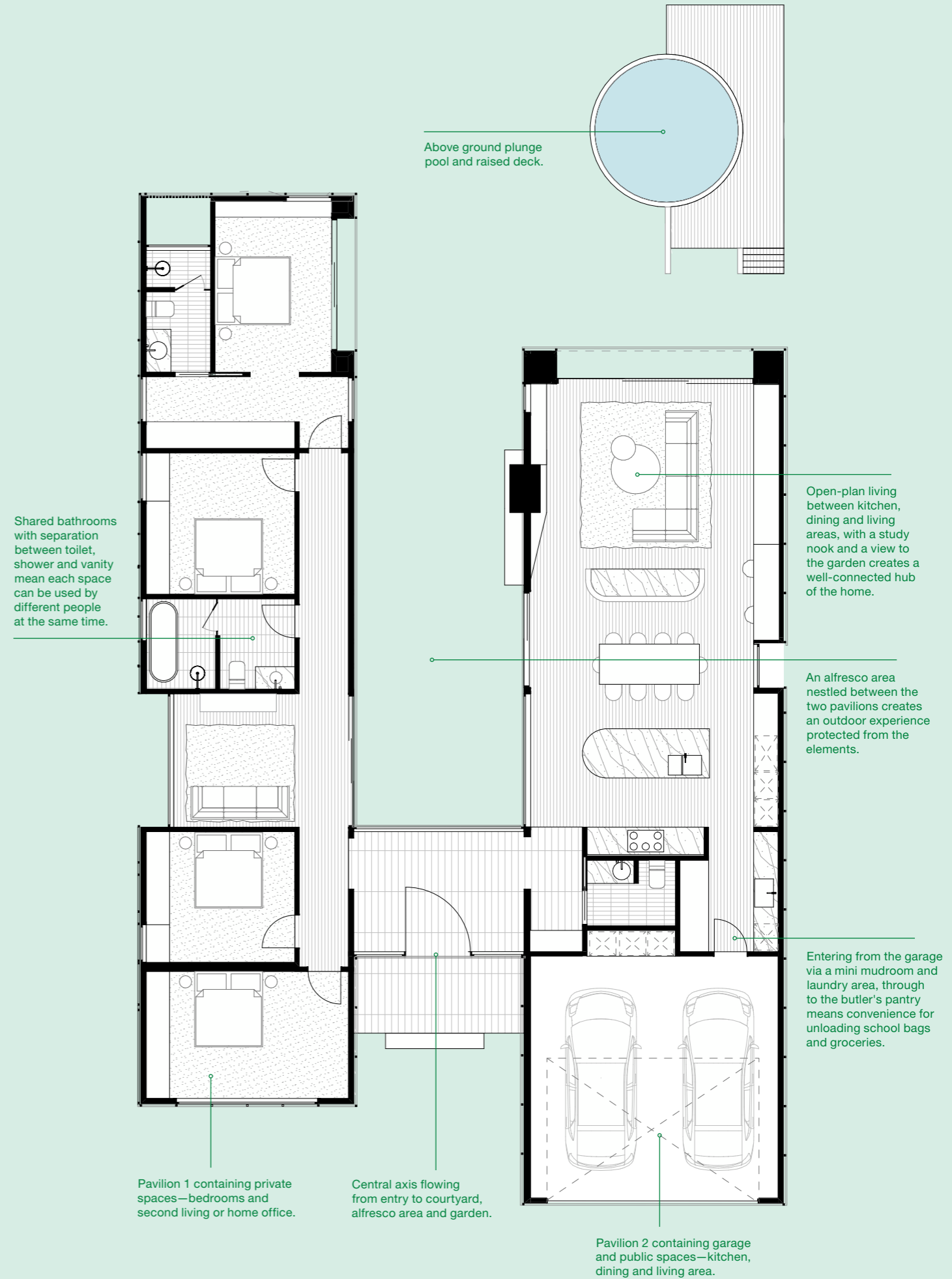
A distinct characteristic of the Modern Farmhouse layout is organisation of two pavilions linked by a breezeway. The clear central axis guides movement from the entry through to the courtyard and alfresco spaces to the rear garden, while the right-hand wing unites kitchen, living and dining areas for seamless daily use. Bedrooms are privately positioned in the left wing, with a secondary living zone providing flexibility for family life. A mudroom and multifunction rooms support evolving routines.

Why it works

The plan balances privacy, connectivity and adaptability, creating a home that responds to both family life and entertaining. The breezeway and central axis support intuitive circulation, while the pavilion-style wings and H-shaped footprint allow for varied indoor-outdoor experiences, natural light and airflow. Flexible zones, multifunction spaces and practical service areas ensure the home can evolve over time, supporting everyday routines as well as seasonal and social use. In elevation, expressive gables and rooflines give the house a distinctive farmhouse character while maintaining a sense of calm, airy and highly livable interiors.

Adaptations

The layout readily supports multigenerational living, working from home or accommodating visiting family. Bedrooms can convert to studies, bunk rooms or guest suites, and private zones can be subtly separated when required. On smaller blocks, the H-shaped can compress while retaining the signature gable identity. Additional pavilions or offset wings can be added as life changes, ensuring long-term adaptability without losing the home's Modern Farmhouse character.



Design features

1—Pavilion roofline

Multiple, interconnecting pavilions with A-shaped, hipped or gable roofs create open, airy layouts and covered verandas. These expressive rooflines evoke a sense of rural tradition and often feature large eaves which creates a distinctive 'farmhouse' look.



2—Contrasting materials

Natural-look materials on the exterior such as vertical-joint cladding are contrasted with black or metallic accents such as window frames or light fittings, which add definition. It can also feature board and batten cladding for a perfect balance of old and new.

3—Natural colours

Grounded hues of biscuit reds, deep greens, and weathered taupe anchor the home in rural calm. Neutral tones showcase tactile surfaces and craftsmanship, creating a serene, inviting atmosphere.

4—Framed views

Large, square or rectangular windows flood interiors with natural light and frame views of the landscape. Signature black frames add a sleek, modern edge to the welcoming ambiance.



House 16 by Three Birds Renovations.

5—Interiors

Interiors blend traditional and modern furnishings in muted shades with chunky forms, soft surfaces and expressive edges. The result is a space that balances comfort, simplicity and enduring character.



House 16 by Three Birds Renovations.



Cladding solutions

Modern Farmhouse layering pairs classic board-and-batten with contemporary cladding, enabling grounded, context-responsive facades that honour rural character while supporting resilient performance and evolving aesthetic preferences.

Hardie™ Axent™ Trim

Hardie™ Axent™ Trim is the perfect batten for board and batten cladding. For a fresh take on this traditional look, pair Hardie™ Axent™ Trim with Stria™ Cladding Fine Texture installed horizontally. This combination creates a dynamic contrast between strong vertical battens and horizontal grooves. The result is a visually layered exterior highlighting Modern Farmhouse's balance of tradition and contemporary simplicity.

Stria™ Cladding Fine Texture

Stria™ Cladding Fine Texture is ideal for horizontal board and batten applications, delivering a robust, modern render look with deep grooves. Its wide format and embedded texture evoke classic farmhouse charm while standing up to the harsh Australian conditions.



Axon™ Cladding 133mm Smooth

Axon™ Cladding 133mm Smooth offers a modern take on vertical-joint timber, bringing rhythm and height to Farmhouse walls. Its smooth surface and durable Hardie™ fibre cement composition helps ensure a fresh look, even in tough rural conditions.

Hardie™ Oblique™ Cladding 200mm + 300mm

Hardie™ Oblique™ Cladding in 200mm and 300mm profiles introduce bold rhythm to Modern Farmhouse facades. Its wide grooves and standing-seam look create expressive vertical lines that sharpen rustic forms while retaining rural character. Installed horizontally or vertically, the contrasting widths deliver depth and scale, reinforcing the style's balance of heritage warmth and contemporary edge.



James Hardie has provided Australian-made building products for over 100 years, with a wide range of our fibre cement products being GreenRate™ Level A certified including Hardie™ Oblique™ Cladding, Linea™ Weatherboard and Stria™ Cladding Fine Texture. All Hardie™ residential exterior cladding has a standard 25-year warranty period.



Colour palettes

A Modern Farmhouse colour palette draws on grounded rural hues layered with contemporary restraint, creating a warm, resilient aesthetic. Earthy neutrals, deep charcoals and weathered timbers anchor the form, while soft whites and natural textures enhance light, depth and architectural clarity without overpowering the home's enduring character.



From Jenny:
 'The real key to the Modern Farmhouse palette is balancing grounded, rural tones with refined restraint—layering depth, warmth and texture so the home feels contemporary and enduring.'

	Scheme 1	Scheme 2	Scheme 3
Roof	Colorbond® steel Monument®	Colorbond® steel Night Sky®	Colorbond® steel Woodland Grey®
Main Walls	Dulux® Colorbond® Dune® Wattyl Solagard® Colorbond® steel Dune® Taubmans® Colorbond® Dune®	Dulux® Brown Earth Wattyl® Rhebok Taubmans® Pumpnickel	Dulux® Wet Sand Wattyl® Sand Pebbles Taubmans® Brimstone
		Dulux® Puddle Wattyl® Light Earth Taubmans® Muddled Puddle	Dulux® Natural White™ Wattyl® Raw Paper Taubmans® Couture White
Trim	Brushed Brass	Dulux® Colorbond® Night Sky® Wattyl Solagard® Colorbond® steel Night Sky® Taubmans® Colorbond® Night Sky®	Victorian Ash Hardwood
Front Door	Victorian Ash Hardwood	Victorian Ash Hardwood	Dulux® Wet Sand Wattyl® Sand Pebbles Taubmans® Brimstone



Style variations

While the familiar farmhouse form anchors the Modern Farmhouse style, variations, variations respond to lifestyle, site conditions and climate. Pavilions, material palettes and junction detailing evolve to suit context, enabling homes that balance resilience, adaptability, comfort and long-term performance across changing family needs.



The Grand Modern Farmhouse

Large-footprint, U-shaped layout arranged around a central pool, with poolhouse and alfresco dining; ideal for acreage properties, larger blocks or rural settings. A classic contrasting monochromatic palette defines the architectural masses.

Featuring Hardie™ Fine Texture Cladding and Axon™ Cladding 133mm Smooth.



Cottage Farmhouse

A softer approach with a light, neutral palette, warm timber accents, modern cottage-style garden. Smaller footprint, suited to suburban blocks, classic H-shaped pavilion layout with central alfresco zone.

Featuring Hardie™ Oblique™ Cladding in 200mm and 300mm.

Double-storey Farmhouse

Extra space on the same footprint, ideal for large families, entertaining or hosting guests, public and private spaces are not only separated into wings but also across upper and lower levels for added privacy, with central outdoor gathering space oriented towards the view.

Featuring Hardie™ Oblique™ Cladding in alternating 200mm and 300mm widths.



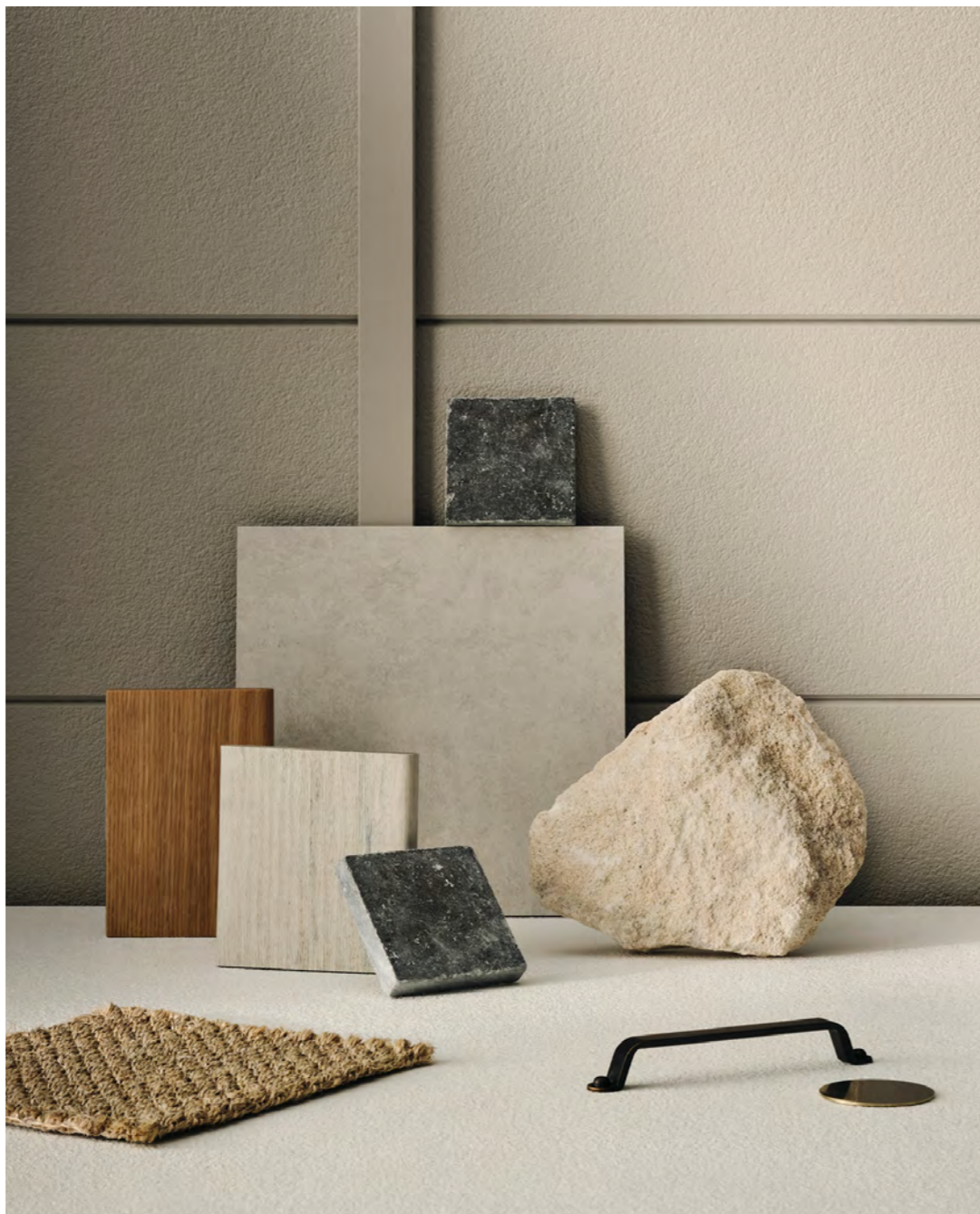
Materials & textures

A grounded material palette layers warm whites, soft stone and pale oak with brushed metals and muted greens, forming a calm, resilient base. Subtle texture replaces contrast, with natural grain, honed finishes and mineral surfaces adding depth while maintaining Modern Farmhouse's understated, enduring character.



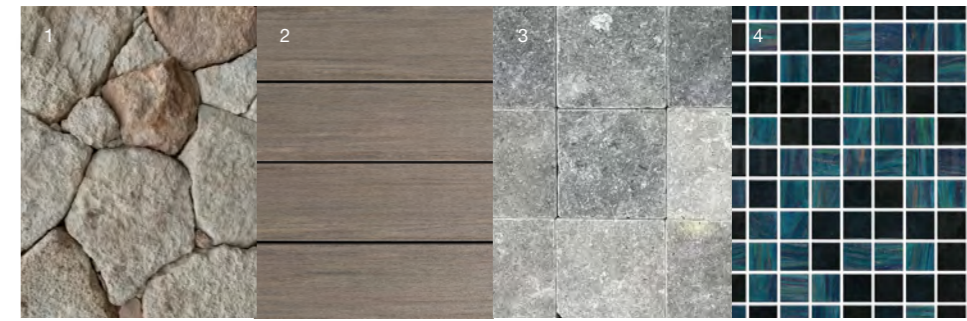
From Rebecca:

'Modern Farmhouse at its most elevated is about considered curation—layering chalky neutrals, honed stone and timber grains so texture, proportion and light create refinement without losing the warmth of rural tradition.'



Exterior

- 1 [Ammos Stone Wall Cladding, RMS Traders](#)
- 2 [PVC Decking, Vintage Collection®, Coastline, TimberTech®](#)
- 3 [London Grey Cobblestone Limestone, RMS Traders](#)
- 4 [Peacock Pearl Blend Pool Tile Glass Mosaic, The Pool Tile Company](#)



Flooring

- 5 Alta Engineered Floorboards, Kustom Timber
- 6 Penza Natural Oak Floorboards, Tongue & Groove
- 7 Chamoisee Natural Oak Floorboards, Tongue & Groove



Walls / Windows

- 8 Brushed Brass Window Frames
- 9 Deep Forest Green Interior Paint, Porter's Paints
- 10 Plaster of Paris Interior Paint, Porter's Paints
- 11 Axon Cladding, Interior, James Hardie



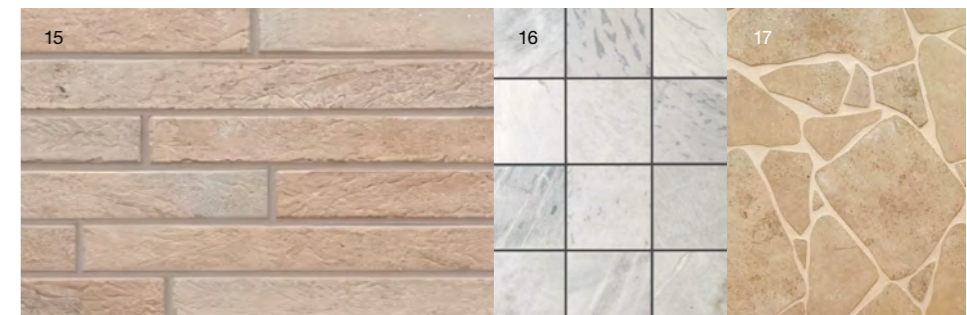
Cabinetry

- 12 Laminex Whitewashed Oak, Laminex
- 13 Laminex Porcelain Blush, Laminex
- 14 Laminex Coolum Sand, Laminex



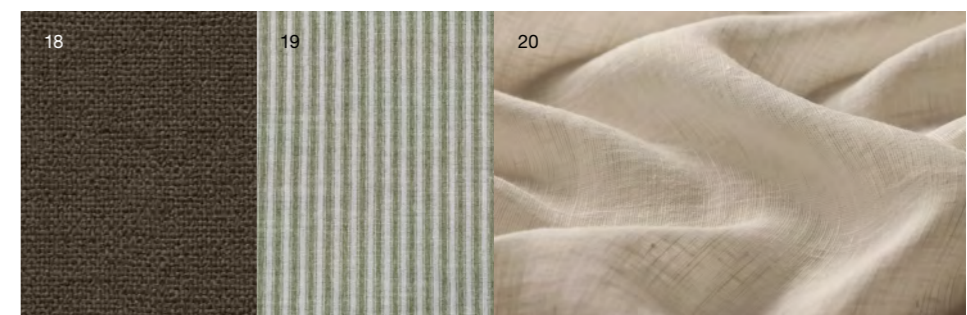
Tiles

- 15 [Paoli Sand Porcelain Wall Cladding, RMS Traders](#)
- 16 [Elba Natural Stone Tile, Artedomus](#)
- 17 [Clovelly Travertine Look Crazy Paving Tile, Tile Cloud](#)



Textiles

- 18 Epitome, Moss Upholstery, James Dunlop Textiles
- 19 Sawyer, Wren Upholstery, Warwick
- 20 Inari Angora Drapery, Warwick



Landscaping

Landscaping extends the grounded character of Modern Farmhouse homes, pairing meadow-style planting and hardy natives with gravel paths, timber decks and shaded verandas. Outdoor rooms balance openness and shelter, fostering connection and independence while embracing seasonal change and relaxed rural living.



Planting a mix of grasses, flowering shrubs and ground cover along boundaries and paths works to soften structural edges and bring colour and texture to the landscape.



From Matt:

‘Whether in warm or cool climates, Modern Farmhouse landscaping works best when it feels natural and effortless—layered planting, natural materials and seasonal shifts creating a calm, cohesive rural character.’

Warm Climates

- 1 Beeblossom—a light, airy perennial great for borders and meadow-style plantings, with slender stems and delicate star-shaped flowers that attract pollinators and add movement to garden beds.
- 2 Native Daisy—a low-growing groundcover or edging, with finely divided foliage and small daisy-like flowers that provide long-lasting colour in garden beds and containers.
- 3 Water Gum—a medium-sized native tree great for street planting or as a shade tree, with dense green foliage and clusters of creamy white flowers that attract birds and pollinators.



Cool Climates

- 4 Maidenhair Tree—a deciduous feature tree with distinctive fan-shaped leaves that turn bright yellow in autumn, often planted as a sculptural focal point in gardens and streetscapes
- 5 Mexican Sage—a soft, shrubby perennial used in borders and mass plantings with grey-green foliage and velvety purple flower spikes that add colour and movement in late season.
- 6 Common Bugle—a hardy, low-growing, semi-evergreen perennial herb in the mint family, prized for its dense ground cover and spike-like, blue-purple flowers in spring.



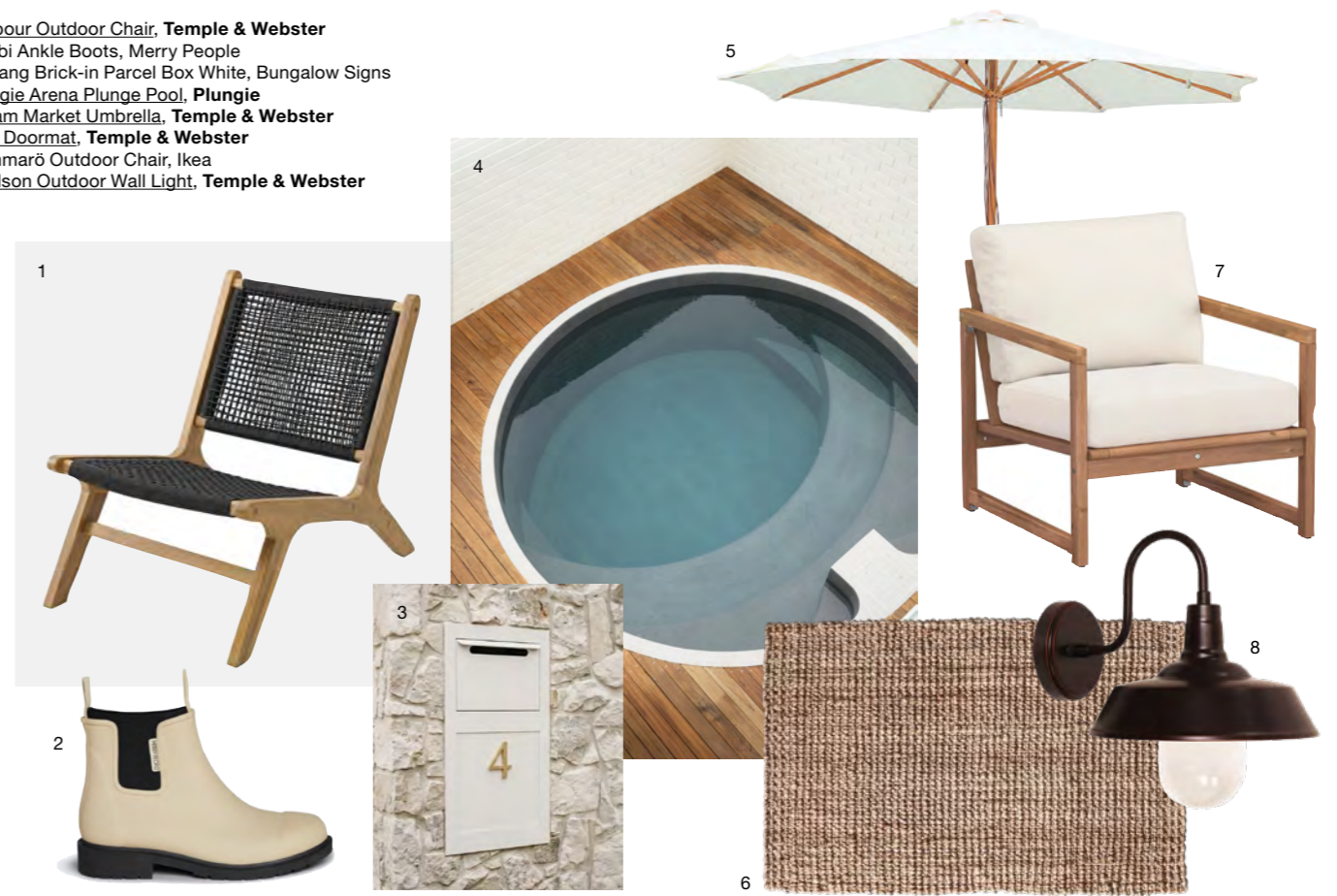
Styling

Modern Farmhouse styling centres on a grounded, tactile environment where rustic simplicity meets contemporary restraint. Natural fibres and warm timbers create calm and comfort, while considered contrasts in metal, stone and soft neutrals layer depth, character and an effortless sense of rural refinement into every detail.



Outdoor

- 1 Harbour Outdoor Chair, Temple & Webster
- 2 Bobbi Ankle Boots, Merry People
- 3 Barrang Brick-in Parcel Box White, Bungalow Signs
- 4 Plungie Arena Plunge Pool, Plungie
- 5 Cream Market Umbrella, Temple & Webster
- 6 Jute Doormat, Temple & Webster
- 7 Nämmarö Outdoor Chair, Ikea
- 8 Coulson Outdoor Wall Light, Temple & Webster



Interior

- 1 Kavri Cushion, Kave Homer
- 2 Olivia Boucle Armchair, Temple & Webster
- 3 Paloma Ceramic Vase, Temple & Webster
- 4 Tamika Teak Wood Bench, Temple & Webster
- 5 Button Handle, Linear Standard
- 6 Melbourne Twin Tap Kitchen Mixer, Antique Brass, Yabby
- 7 Faux Olive Tree, Temple & Webster
- 8 Flodbjörk Plant Pot, Ikea
- 9 Miller Jute Rug, Temple & Webster





Explore the Hardie™ AI Visualiser

Visualise, customise and communicate your design vision with Hardie™ products and the latest modern home styles from the James Hardie Modern Homes Forecast 2026.

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