



# Twisted Sister

Self-taught designer Tom Givone continues his practice of updating 19th-century farmhouses with unexpected details and salvaged materials with his latest creation—a torqued-volume addition to an 1850s family homestead in Pennsylvania.

**PHOTOS BY**  
Christopher Testani

**PROJECT**  
Twist Farmhouse  
**ARCHITECTS**  
Joe Rominski and  
Rick Hammer; [rominiarc.com](http://rominiarc.com)  
**DESIGNER**  
Tom Givone; [givonehome.com](http://givonehome.com)  
**LOCATION**  
Falls, Pennsylvania

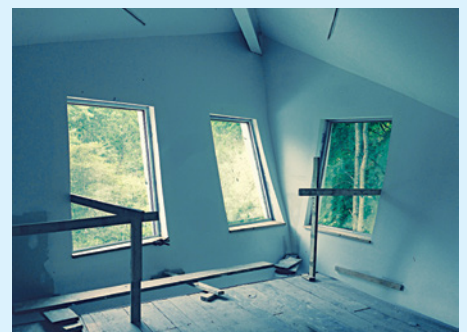
Tom Givone's clients, Rose and Steve Smith, teach overseas and have owned their house for 26 years. They intended to fix it up slowly and retire there. As one problem led to another, they reached a point when they felt their only option, as Rose put it, was to "burn it down." Givone, at right, calls this project a companion to his Floating Farmhouse, featured in *Dwell* in 2012. See more at [dwell.com/floating-farmhouse](http://dwell.com/floating-farmhouse)





“What surprised me most was my clients’ willingness to go all in with me on this unusual vision—a total leap of faith.”  
—Tom Givone, designer

Chicago Metal Rolled Products, a company that specializes in roller coaster track, fabricated the addition’s columns using a technique called “round tube bending”—a cold process by which straight 8-foot-long hollow tubes are pushed through a series of dies and rollers to bend them into a desired shape. Check out [givonehome.com](http://givonehome.com) to see a behind-the-scenes video of the project.



**Givone:** Their only directives to me were open space and lots of light. The house was a lot like other similarly aged homes that had been updated over the years—the 70s called and wants its linoleum back. But I knew that the good stuff, like the original wide plank floors and hand-hewn beams, was lurking beneath all those layers. So the first design impetus was to bring the original house back. The second was to turn it on its ear. My client grew up with her seven siblings in the old farmhouse right across the street. Her brother

still lives there, and like the creek that runs through both properties, family flows freely back and forth. I imagined this bond as a physical force, like a gravitational field between the two homes, acting on the addition and “pulling” it toward the original farmhouse across the street. This was how I arrived at the volume’s shape—it’s a sculptural expression of family connection. Twisting it opened up new sightlines, allowing my client to view her childhood home and the surrounding fields as the structure “nods” toward those areas.



The new custom kitchen is situated in the original structure. Givone sourced a slab of marble for the sink and countertop from Thompson Stone in Montague, New Jersey.

The window is a new commercial unit with an operable frameless center pane and was set so that the countertop could tuck right underneath it to create a 1/4-inch shadow line.

**Givone:** This project posed immense challenges, not least of which was finding the resources to build such an unusual, complex form; tough under any circumstances, but in a rural farming community...who was I kidding? To that end, I tapped local architects Joe Rominski and Rick Hammer of JRA Architects in Scranton, Pennsylvania. They modeled and designed the five curving columns that form the skeleton of the new addition and make its undulating walls possible.





**Givone:** The architects also sourced a steel company in Chicago, specializing in roller coaster track, to fabricate the columns. From there, it was about assembling a team that welcomed the twin challenges of meticulous restoration work and cutting-edge construction (they were not to be disappointed). What surprised me most about the project was my clients' willingness to go all in with me on this unusual

vision for their home; a total leap of faith. When we met, I assumed a traditional renovation would be their only interest. To be granted that level of trust was a very humbling experience. What's next for me is putting the finishing touches on my own home, a small Victorian row house in Harlem. I also have another historic farmhouse renovation in the Catskills, which is presently in the design phase. □

**"I would say my personal aesthetic is clearly modern, but with an old soul."  
—Tom Givone, designer**

A sitting area outside the master bedroom overlooks the dining room (above left). The bathroom features a salvaged 1920s schoolhouse sink from Olde Good Things. The faucet mixers are

by Jado; the original single tap openings were enlarged to fit them, and the entire sink was re-glazed (top). Kartell's 4801 chair occupies a corner of the master bedroom (above).

# Make it Yours Tom Givone sourced a few of his favorite items from The Dwell Store to appear in the Twist Farmhouse.



**Adónde Stackable Stoneware Fruit Bowl by Adonde, \$98**  
A modular serveware piece that can be used as both a fruit bowl and a flat serving surface.



**Slate Plate by Menu, \$18-\$20** This versatile dish transforms from dining plate and cheese board to trivet or a place setting.



**9.5.2 Walnut Bread Box by On Our Table, \$250** It almost looks like a large block of wood, but a small aperture marks the lid.



**Bottle Grinders by Menu, \$60** Each spill-resistant bottle can grind it all—salt, pepper, spices—you name it.



**1.5.1 Ray Long Serving Board by On Our Table, \$90** Geometric angles and beveled edges make it easy to pick up and serve.



**MU Flatware Place Setting by Alessi, \$90** A distinctive cutlery set with sleek lines softened with rounded forms.



**Eva Vases by KleinReid, \$75-\$175** Legendary designer Eva Zeisel collaborated with KleinReid on this porcelain trio.



**Kiki Sofa – 2 Seater by Artek, \$2,636** Elegant and timeless, the Kiki collection was created in 1960 by Ilmari Tapiovaara.



**Bauer Pottery 12 oz. Beehive Coffee Mug, \$28** Recalling the company's classic 1930s design, this handmade mug sports a pronounced handle and a tall profile.



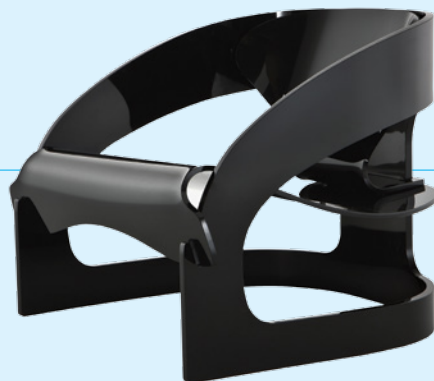
**Hasami Porcelain Mug 15 oz. – Black, \$28** Crafted from a blend of porcelain and clay, this mug is softer to the touch than traditional porcelain, and features a soft matte-black finish.



**Strap Magazine Basket by AMT + Mimot, \$195** A finely crafted storage option that blends luxe materials—vegetable-tanned leather and copper-plated rivets—and a traditional design.

For more information, please visit [store.dwell.com](http://store.dwell.com) or email [customerservice@dwell.com](mailto:customerservice@dwell.com)

**4801 Armchair by Kartell, \$3,000** A re-edition of an all-wood armchair designed by Joe Colombo in the 1960s. This time, the chair is reborn in Kartell's signature PMMA material.



**Ombre Throw by Avoca, \$150** Steeped in the tradition of the nearly 300-year-old Irish company, this throw blanket is comprised of approximately 400 threads that have been lined up and tied by hand.

