

**LAURIE ELSASS**  
BLACK JACK FARM  
PLAIN CITY

**Equestrian experience:**

The 48-year-old mother of three rode horses as a child, quit at 15, and started again at 38. Two years ago, she began showing horses competitively in the hunter/jumper disciplines. She typically trains five days a week and competes twice a month. She lives in Dublin but owns this barn in Plain City, where she trains.

**This space:**

Black Jack Farm is a functioning training facility home to 10 horses, including Elsass's beloved show horse, Captain Jack Sparrow. But Elsass had visions of indoor quarters unlike any she had seen. "Literally," she says, "I dreamt it up." So in 2010, she turned a pole barn into an entertaining venue, where she has hosted functions from intimate dinner parties to 500-person corporate events. (Her husband, Rex, owns The Strategy Group for Media, which specializes in political communications.) Interior designer Mark Huffman, of Huffman & Huffman in New Albany, helped give the space the feel Elsass wanted: contemporary. They aimed for "equestrian, but not kitschy," Huffman says. "Sophisticated. Comfortable." The 1,500-square-foot space includes a great room, kitchen, dining area, bar and powder room. "I love it," Elsass says. "It's my happy place."

**WHAT SHE'S WEARING**

Astor & Black top, Tailored Sportsman breechès, La Mundial boots, Prada belt

**CHEERS**

The dining room's main event—the custom table (right) that comfortably seats 10—was made by Columbus craftsman Chuck Harnack. "He produces the best work in the world," interior designer Mark Huffman says. "He is an amazing craftsman." The adjoining bar boasts sliding stall doors as windows and pewter backsplash tiles and countertops. Since most of the functions here are catered, Huffman worked closely with the Elsass' caterer to design the kitchen. It includes one giant refrigerator (no freezer), three ovens, two sinks and two dishwashers. It is the only room without brick floors, as the chef preferred hardwood.



**LUXE LIVING**

Delicious details abound in the great room (below) which includes four seating areas. Huffman worked with Fortner Upholstery & Fine Furnishings to create a few custom pieces, including the large cowhide coffee-table ottoman in the center of the room. The buffet and mirror were also custom built for the space and glazed by a local artist. Light glows from a variety of sources, including three custom chandeliers, a handful of lamps and several wall sconces. "We wanted it to have a warm and romantic feel," Elsass says. Huffman topped the look with two Hermes blankets. "Every project needs a little touch of Hermes!" he jokes.



They dreamed of creating an equestrian-inspired space that was sophisticated and comfortable. "We wanted it to have a warm and romantic feel," Elsass said.

