

# Country French

Live in  
Comfortable  
Elegance



24

ISSN 1551-0758

0 72440 14433 0

meredithSpecials

Fall/Winter 2012  
On the cover and October 23  
9116.com/CountryFrench



*enlightened*  
**elegance**

A seamless medley of painted finishes, French antiques, and calming colors draws out the softer side of a Houston home.

www: KIMBER MITCHELL photographer: THILASHOVAN artist: SANDRA L. BOHLMANN

Modern comfort and old-world charm converge in Lisa Swalm Frantz's family room, where wooden ceiling beams, stone walls, and a Louis XVI-style bench mingle with a reproduction sofa and tufted chairs upholstered in casual yet classic linen.







THIS PHOTO Pillows made of Fortuny fabric add splashes of glamour to an antique French settee and a pair of bergères in the antiqued-paneled study. RIGHT: Formality reigns in the dining room, where an elegant antique Italian crystal chandelier and Louis XVI-style cane-back chairs dressed in Fortuny fabric set an elegant stage for entertaining.



Without a doubt, it was love at first sight when interior designer Katie Stassi-Scott showed homeowner Lisa Swalm Frantz a romantic painted commode in a decorating magazine. Dressed in dreamy blues, grays, and creams, the commode's curvaceous silhouette and graceful floral embellishments embodied the sense of serenity the busy mother of four daughters sought for her French-style home in Houston. "My previous home was decorated in darker earth tones and browns," Lisa says. "I wanted this home to be a new beginning with everything light."

Built in 2006, the home welcomes in light through expansive windows and French doors. "They remind me of French architecture and how French homes connect with the outdoors," says Lisa, who loves to explore off-the-beaten-path places in the countryside during annual trips to France. But the home's original dark mahogany doors and window trim stole some of the light's luminosity and didn't mesh with the open and airy interiors Lisa envisioned calling home. The house called out for a light makeover.





**THE FIRST** A rustic, rustic table was elegantly with an 18th-century base in the breakfast room. **OPPOSITE** The rich palette of limestone countertops and distressed sage green cabinetry defines the new kitchen's look. An antique Orzech runner adds warmth to the floor.



Taking her cue from the French commode, Stasi-Scott enlightened the view with a tranquil palette of painted finishes. A fresh coat of creamy paint gave the once-dark doors and window trim renewed zest. In the kitchen and study, the dark millwork was refreshed with sage green and cream paint, respectively, then distressed. "The workers literally used hammers and tools to beat up the wood," Stasi-Scott says. "And multiple layers of paint and wax were applied, removed, then reapplied to achieve the impression of time."

Although the interiors were blessed with good architectural bones, such as stone walls, reclaimed mantels, and even marble tile from a centuries-old chateau, the home lacked furnishings befitting that aged allure. Stasi-Scott cultivated old-world charm with time-honored treasures culled from the French countryside as well as antiques shops in New Orleans'

French Quarter. In the formal dining room, an 18th-century painted French buffet recalls the inspiration commode, while an ornate French trousseau and classical Louis XVI-style chairs impart bygone splendor in the breakfast room. Throughout the home, antique French and Italian chandeliers cast a soft, romantic glow evocative of yesteryear. "The home's grand scale and formal French flair called for a sense of formality," Stasi-Scott says. "At the same time, I wanted to create comfort and an inviting atmosphere for this young family."

Accordingly, new custom-made furnishings with comfy proportions encourage lingering in more casual areas, such as the family room. "A modern piece of furniture or painting adds youthfulness to a room, while an antique softens the severity of modern lines," Stasi-Scott says. "Together, they work beautifully."



**TOP PHOTO:** A favorite black-and-white palette inspired this bedroom's romantic color scheme. An 18th-century Italian painted chest echoes the delicate lines of the French bedlinens and Louis XVI-style headboard. **OPPOSITE LEFT:** Developed in a light and airy linen, an 18th-century French canopy provides a dreamy backdrop for a reproduction Louis XVI-style bed in one of the girls' bedrooms. **OPPOSITE RIGHT:** The family room opens to an inviting loggia, which beckons with artistic comforts.



"The gilding and *crystals* on many of the chandeliers are like touches of jewelry, adding *shimmer* and glamour to the surroundings."

—Interior Designer KATHERINE SCOTT

Fabrics also reflect the interior's elegant yet approachable flair. Lighthearted linen upholstery on new and antique pieces offers to comfort, while luxurious cashmere and velvet pillows and throws introduce color and tactile interest. At the windows, floor-to-ceiling draperies billow like bed gowns, framing rooms with sumptuous silk tulle while inviting in ample natural light.

Such design duality succeeds in the public rooms thanks to a creamy palette, which appears on furnishings and in stonework and plasters from aged plaster walls. "One room is an invitation into the next," Lisa says. "I love the simplicity of French style."

The restrained canvas of color provides solace to Lisa, who also derives a sense of peace from the spiritual world. "She is passionate about religious artifacts and reliquaries," says Stamm-Scott, who subtly incorporated spiritual symbols into the decor. For example, the dining room's antique mirror is positioned to capture the placid reflection of an antique French carved angel hung on the other side of the room.

Surrounded by the treasures she loves, Lisa relaxes her serene everyday haven. "I love the way my house taps into all the senses," she says. "I feel like Dorothy in *The Wizard of Oz*. No matter where I go, there's no place like home." ©