

# COUNTRY FRENCH

*bring your favourite style home*

Add  
Warmth &  
Patina to  
Every  
Room

Decorate  
with Treasures  
Old & New



OUTDOOR  
ROOMS  
WE CAN'T  
STOP  
DREAMING  
ABOUT

Elegant Looks with  
Salvaged Materials

THIS PHOTO: Susan and Jay Hawthorne's 14-foot-long reclaimed Russian oak table hosts some of Susan's treasured dish collections, including Bastille-made Astier de Villatte dinnerware. OPPOSITE: The dining room's fireplace wall was designed to hold a massive mirror (measuring 6x5 feet) scored from an antiques dealer who found the piece, emblazoned with a French menu, in Belgium.





# THE MIX

*it's all in*

CHERISHED COLLECTIONS AND RUSTIC FINISHES CREATE  
A PERSONALIZED HOME THAT INVITES FRIENDS AND FAMILY  
TO STAY AWHILE.

writer: ANN WILSON photographer: BRIE WILLIAMS producer: BONNIE BROTEN





OPPOSITE: Twelve-foot-tall windows flood the living room with light, which bounces off gilded French mirrors and chests tucked into niches flanking the fireplace. LEFT: Repurposed snow fencing boards from Montana trim doorways throughout the house. BELOW: The home's front door is modeled after those commonly spied in southern France. It's made from boards used to grow mushrooms. Acid from the mushrooms creates cracks and knots that give the wood an aged look.



Taking her cue from how the French live and entertain, Susan Hawthorne has made “Use the good stuff every day!” her decorating mantra. Whether she’s setting her reclaimed-wood tabletop for lunch or dressing her upholstered bedstead, she finds happiness in fashioning elegant spaces where nothing is hands-off.

The longtime home-decor retailer carried the theme—and a French accent—throughout the riverside home that she and her husband, Jay, built in French Broad Crossing in Madison County, North Carolina—a development near where Susan spent many childhood summers. “I love the surprise of contrasting refined and rustic,” Susan says. “Country French style appeals to me because it embraces imperfection. Gilded finishes add a wonderful warm

effect to a room, but it’s better if they are chipped. Wonderful old fabrics—maybe a bit worn and tattered, but too lovely to discard—make beautiful pillows and seat covers. All of these qualities add up to a comfortable family home.”

Susan’s affinity for French design started 20 years ago when she first took a group tour of Paris’ famed flea markets. “I found inspiration at every turn—whether I was wandering the streets, looking into store windows, or stopping at a florist,” she says. Soon she was a repeat customer, flying home with black-and-white transferware on her lap one trip, then with a vintage door knocker and the beginnings of a pottery collection stowed in her luggage on another.

Sketching her North Carolina floor plan was a chance for Susan to create a fitting home for her

treasures—and even more importantly, a way for her to embrace a lifestyle of easy elegance she'd come to admire. "We wanted the home to be bright and light, open to the river, and set up for entertaining," Susan says. Architect Al Platt and builder Marc Tyner conquered a steep lot, optimized mountain and water views, and showcased local materials that would reflect an old-world spirit to bring Susan's vision to life. And they made room for two kitchens: a must-have for Susan for easy entertaining.

"We know that everyone gathers in the kitchen, so we created two spaces," Susan says. "The larder is our prep kitchen; the larger kitchen is a seamless part of our dining hall."

In these spaces—and throughout the home—warm gray hues in varying shades and textures are carried out via marble tiles, stone countertops and floors, reclaimed beams, painted windows, weathered snow fencing boards, and Doggett Mountain

RIGHT: Marble subway tile provides a timeless backdrop for serving dishes displayed on brass-plated shelves in the larder. FAR RIGHT: A mix of metals—including copper pots and burnished brass door pulls—adds sophisticated sheen to the kitchen, balancing a backsplash of North Carolina fieldstone. Varying cabinet colors and countertop materials contribute to the collected look, disguising the kitchen's youth.





RIGHT: Empty gilded frames, beloved for their carved details, decorate the mantel in the master bedroom. BELOW: An antique Italian chandelier and a vintage Italian mirrored shelf add patina to the master bath. OPPOSITE: Painted and distressed boards dress the upper walls and ceiling in the master bedroom. A velvet-upholstered and gilded headboard adds a touch of formal glamour that Susan loves.



stone. “We opted for warm gray backdrops so I could do pops of seasonal colors—chartreuse in the summer, blushing pinks in spring, and tomato reds at Christmas,” Susan says.

The gray tones are equally at home on casual and formal elements, making them an ideal way for Susan to unite a host of styles and furnishings—many of which are antiques she curated on shopping trips to Scott Antique Markets in Atlanta.

“My collections blend beautifully into the overall look,” Susan says. “It was just a blast to build this house. There’s plenty of room for the grandkids to pile in. I can see and hear the river in every room. And the kitchen is awesome. We had 15 people cooking at Christmas and on New Year’s, and we squeezed 22 people at the dining table. This is a very livable French home that just happens to be in the mountains of North Carolina!” ❁



“ I like *rustic*, but I will never,  
ever give up my *crystal* chandeliers! ”

—homeowner SUSAN HAWTHORNE

