



An Affinity for French



AN ATLANTA COUPLE'S RENOVATION PAYS HOMAGE TO THE SOUTH OF FRANCE WITH NEW WINDOWS, DOORS, SIDING, AND A HOST OF RUSTIC ARCHITECTURAL FIXTURES.

Home: Candace and Warren. Photography: Deborah White-Lewis/Art. Photo Editor: Eleanor Pagan.





OPPOSITE A rare antique chandelier—the drawing from which a tapestry was woven—is the focal point of the entry wall behind an antique French bench. LEFT The entry received continental flair with a wrought-iron staircase railing hand-forged by a local artisan. Furnishings here and throughout the house, many 18th-century French antiques, have been collected by the owner through the years.

For the first 11 years Leanne and Chris Shaw lived in their Atlanta home, it was a red brick two-story with Georgian elements winking homage across the Atlantic to England. But the Shaws are Francophiles. So they braced themselves for an *affaire d'honneur* with a house that thwarted their passions. By 2001, Leanne had had enough with the dual. "I wanted a country French house," she says, "and was ready to move."

Fortunately, architect Linda MacArthur intervened. "I told Leanne there was no need. We could make changes to this house to give it the look she wanted," says MacArthur, who had been consulting with the Shaws about remodeling their kitchen.

"We did it backwards," Leanne says with a laugh. "We renovated the Georgian facade first, then did the interior renovation." This reverse order entailed at least one advantage: It allowed the Shaws to swell with Gallic pride every time they turned down the drive. "Our rooms were a mess,

but the front of the house looked beautiful," Leanne says.

Changing the facade from Georgian to French required hiding the red brick beneath a top coat of stucco. A pointy English center gable and the squared-off edges of the lower level's windows and door were next to go. "We changed the center element from a gable to a half-round," MacArthur says, "and we changed the windows and front door to arches. We also went from a single door to a custom double door, which has a more European look." Long pale blue shutters and elegant patinated light fixtures dot the stucco as French accents.

BRING IN CHARM THROUGH DETAILS

Your choice of architectural elements goes far in setting a room's tone. The hand-forged wrought-iron railing, distinctive reproduction chandelier, and arched doorways transformed this home's entry from formal Georgian to cozy country French.





Creating a French Look

Country French style blends comfort and elegance in a way few others do. Here are the key architectural features:

■ **Charming exterior design** Convey a classic look with stucco, stone, and/or brick siding, plus hipped or steep gable roofs, arched doors, and windows with shutters.

■ **Warm architectural elements** Consider wrought-iron railings, light fixtures, and door hardware whenever possible. Choose plumbing fixtures in complementary finishes. Wood beams and traditional casement windows work well in many cases.

■ **Rustic finishes** Get the quintessential look with floors of stone, stone-look ceramic tile, and wide-plank, rough-hewn wood. Cast-concrete or limestone mantels work well in the living room, as do wood or granite countertops and painted- or stained-wood cabinets in the kitchen.

New arched windows in the living room add European ambience, which is underscored by shutters from a local antiques shop, a French sconce, coffee table, and antique mirror.

CONNECT TO THE OUTDOORS

Renovating in the true country-French sense includes a strong indoor/outdoor link. This new screen porch, for instance, includes French door access from the kitchen and dining room. A stone fireplace, steel rug, andicker furnishings make it cozy.



Inside, what began as a kitchen expansion fast became an addition that involved doubling the kitchen's depth on the main level, excavating a new playroom downstairs, and building a new master bedroom upstairs. "We decided to design the kitchen like a big, open kitchen in Provence," MacArthur says. "Instead of having a breakfast room, we put the table out in the middle of the room." Like most of the other pieces in the house, both the table and chairs are 19th-century country French.

Rustic ceiling beams lend rugged character to the renovated space. "The beams in France have a real structural purpose, so there are tons of them. That's why we spaced ours really close together," MacArthur says. "We also have some timbers as posts in the kitchen as a result of our research, and we consulted books to determine whether our decision to stain instead of paint the doors was correct. It was."

ABOVE: Old stone salvaged from Europe and a mortar made using 150-year-old beams from a home in Providence, Rhode Island, combine to create the screen porch's focal point fireplace.
RIGHT: New French doors, stained oak for authenticity, open a previously solid wall in the dining room to the screen porch.









with an almost architectural presence. Antiques abound in every room. An 18th-century French table dresses the dining room, and 17th-century Italian chairs accompany it.

In the new master bedroom, French design is incorporated via a wrought-iron balcony and a striking hipped ceiling lined with bois. "Because this was an addition, we were able to do what we wanted," MacArthur says.

The Narves' delight with their home's transformation—indoors and out—is ongoing. They continue to receive the occasional visit from a Sunday driver curious enough to "knock on the door and say, 'What did you do?'" says Lentze, who never tires of answering that question. |||

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ABOVE: A wrought-iron balcony, stained French doors, and a 19th-century hipped ceiling infuse the master bedroom with French character.

LEFT: A few market-find finds, salvaged from an old home in Tennessee, dress up the master bedroom's prefabricated fireplace.



Architectural Highlights

- Side entry garage to maximize curb appeal
- Screen porch connection to two rooms
- Cozy kitchen with a pair of window seats
- Master bedroom with fireplace and balcony
- Two walk-in closets off master bath

MAIN LEVEL 50 FT. x 38 FT.
 UPPER LEVEL 50 FT. x 38 FT.
 BEDROOMS 4
 BATHROOMS 3 1/2, 1 half



Architect: Linda MacArthur
 Interior Designer: Laura Wicker
 Builder: Mike LaBelle, APC Builders, Inc.