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Accentuating the *Elegance*

Authentic Provençal Architecture
and Carefully Planned Interiors
Exude an Irresistible Joie de Vivre

BY ROBERTA LANDMAN PHOTOGRAPHY BY JILL RICHARDS



Curving gracefully around a circular gravel motor court, the home's exterior features the Provençal region's distinctive blue shutters on windows and doorway openings, says architectural designer Clay Scrivner. Topiaries and stone-wall-defined garden beds are also typically French, he adds.

IT'S LIKE THE SETTING FOR A HOLLYWOOD MOVIE. Just one look, and you can almost hear the late French actor Charles Boyer singing "C'est Magnifique" in the background. And as the camera pans to a shot of steaming onion soup, the distinctive pop of a champagne cork resonates off-screen. But in real life, this residence needs not even a soupçon of mood-enhancing effects to accentuate its many attributes. Tucked behind a gate in a Paradise Valley neighborhood, the 9,000-square-foot luxury home is already loaded with ooh-la-la atmosphere—specifically that of an old chateau in a



LEFT: With a dramatic view and French doors opening to the backyard, the foyer hints at delights to come. The carved antique table as well as the wood sculptures from the mast of an old ship are treasures from the family's travels, says interior designer Terese Messina. Apple-green velvet ottomans pop against the marble flooring, while a cylindrical hand-blown bubble-glass and metal chandelier hangs overhead.

PREVIOUS PAGE: The back wall of this passageway, with its series of arched windows and French doors, was salvaged when the previous house on the property was razed. Now, it is a star feature in what Scrivner calls The Grand Hall.



LEFT: Equipped with modern conveniences, the kitchen is also replete with elements of old-world French Provincial charm, including wide-plank walnut flooring, marble countertops and backsplash, traditional-style custom white cabinetry, a deep stainless steel range hood and a long farmhouse table. Bright chartreuse faux-leather-topped island stools add a jolt of hip color.

ABOVE: Gathered at the kitchen island are (from left) daughters Meryl and Sophie, dad Peter and son Sam.

village in France's Provence region, says architectural designer Clay Scrivner. "The architectural style is undeniably Country French," he explains. "It is unpretentious, humble architecture, with clean lines and simple forms."

All this is immediately apparent on first glimpse of the romantic-looking home's gently arcing facade. Below a red-tiled roof, off-white walls are finished in smooth stucco, blue-painted wood shutters accent deep recessed windows and doors, and, up high, small, inset multipaned windows are surrounded by elongated European-style bricks. "It is all so Provence," says Scrivner with enthusiasm.

That's exactly what homeowner Peter wanted. "We knew French style could work well for us," he says, "but we needed an architect who fully understood true French Provincial architecture. We wanted to be completely accurate and authentic to the style. Clay was able to do that for us. Every week, he brought us images and ideas of how best to authentically express the design."

Scrivner was part of a cadre that brought the entire house—inside and out—from drawing board to fruition. Also included were interior designer Terese Messina, builder Greg Hunt and landscape architect Russ Greedy.

The interiors, Messina's bailiwick, profited from Peter's focused design preferences and good planning. "The house design was a labor of love that

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—Peter, homeowner

took years of thought,” Peter remembers. “For more than a decade, we collected images that moved or inspired us. We collected fabric patterns, colors and textures—and, ultimately, we worked extensively with Terese. She was able to capture all that we had imagined and more. Terese was able to take our words, ideas and images and create functional spaces for our family.”

The 18-month building project included replacing a previous house on the property in which Peter’s family had lived for nine years. Except for a remaining rear wall—now a stunning backdrop in The Grand Hall—the dwelling was demolished.

The final result, which was ready for occupancy in time for Thanksgiving 2013, is a home with authentic old Provençal detailing on the outside



OPPOSITE AND ABOVE: Under a sloping beamed ceiling, the dining room woos with a mix of old and new and a calm sea of blue. An existing round table was refinished; its chairs were re-covered with leather on the seats and velvet and raffia on the backs. The traditional crystal chandelier juxtaposes with a contemporary abstract oil-on-canvas painting in the sitting area.





"The owners are not afraid of using color in all its various strengths," says Messina. For example, the living room's existing wood-framed armchairs were re-covered in a cut velvet textile with a vibrant fuchsia cherry blossom design. It is the many gradations of blue, however, that figure prominently throughout the home. Here, bold saturations of the color appear in silk draperies, cotton velvet-upholstered easy chairs and ottomans, and decorative accessories.



A large custom leather-wrapped desk is the centerpiece of the study. Another eye-catcher—a glass-and-steel solarium—lies just beyond. And yes, those are bicycles hanging in there. The homeowner is a long-distance cyclist, and he likes to keep his bike collection within easy reach.



and interiors based on how families live today. According to Messina, comfort for all ages was always at the forefront in a design scheme that is at once eclectic and sophisticated with a “fresh, transitional” blend of traditional and Modern elements. Among several amenities are a game room to suit the family’s three children, a bistro with a custom temperature-controlled wine cellar to please the adults and a swimming pool with resortlike flair that everyone enjoys.

Although his kids are more mature than they were when the home was built—two are now in

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With its faux-bronze-painted domed ceiling and Texas limestone-clad walls, the bistro is pure fun. Belly up in style to a bar made of blue agates, or kick back on a cut velvet sectional. A custom wine cellar keeps vino properly chilled.



Natural daylight floods the casual family room through broad banks of steel-mullioned windows topped with wood-framed clerestory windows. As with other spaces in the house, blue is central to the room's color scheme, featuring prominently on the painted-and-glazed raffia-covered coffee table, the plush velvet tufted bench, toss pillows and the welting of the linen-weave sofa.



college—Peter says the residence still functions well. “Even though it’s a large home, there are various quiet small venues within it that allow for all sorts of events and all sorts of moods.” Among his favorite settings: “The family room, with its extraordinary views and ample couch, is my relaxation spot, while the bistro is warm and welcoming for small gatherings of friends.

“My study, with its view of the front entrance and of my bike collection, is easy to sit in and work for hours at a time,” he adds “Often, one of my children will join me there, sitting on the couch, to catch up on their day.” A glassed-in enclosure, a solarium of sorts added off his study, serves as a repository for the bicycles he uses in long-distance rides.

Elegant and at times playful, this residence is an authentic slice of France set in the Arizona desert, all involved agree. And as both the French and a line from an old song say, “C’est si bon.” Peter agrees. “It’s so good,” indeed. ■

ABOVE: Portuguese water dog Pepper joins Meryl and Sophie at the pool near the guest cottage. Water cascades from a bronze scupper on a towerlike structure, which bears rows of genoise clay tiles that help prevent rainwater from damaging stucco-clad walls.

LEFT: The residence is home to many pets, including this chicken, held by Sophie.