

heartfelt
defection

Francophiles turn the tide on a
Georgian home by banishing its English
elements in favor of beautiful Gallic touches
inside and out.

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Renovating in the true country French sense involves creating a strong indoor-outdoor link. To that end, the kitchen and dining room include French door access to this new screen porch. For instant patina, the fireplace is made from old stone salvaged from Europe; its mantel is crafted from a 150-year-old beam found in a Rhode Island home.







OPPOSITE: An 18th-century French table accompanied by 17th-century Italian chairs dress up the dining room. LEFT: Ceiling beams added to the existing family room imbue it with country character. BELOW: New arched windows and shutters helped transform the accent of Leanne and Chris Shaw's Atlanta home from English to French.

There was nothing wrong with the red brick two-story Georgian-style residence Leanne and Chris Shaw called home in Atlanta, except for its heritage. As Francophiles, the Shaws found themselves engaged in an *affaire d'honneur* with a house that thwarted their true passion. After 11 years, Leanne had had enough of the duel. "I wanted a country French house," she says, "and was ready to move."

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





THIS PHOTO: Arched windows in the living room add European ambience, which is underscored by a French sconce, an iron-and-glass coffee table, and shutters. OPPOSITE LEFT: An antique French bench sits in front of a rare antique cartoon in the entry. OPPOSITE RIGHT: Wrought-iron railings hand-forged by a local artisan give the staircase Continental flavor.



Hand-forged wrought-iron railings, a distinctive chandelier, and *arched* doorways give the front entry a cozy country French look.

Changing the facade from Georgian to French required hiding the red brick beneath a top coat of stucco and transforming a pointy English center gable into a half-round. The squared-off edges of the lower-level windows were reshaped into arches, and the single front door was replaced with a more French-looking double door. Pale-blue shutters and elegant patinated light fixtures completed the transformation.

Inside, Leanne and Chris wanted to indulge their Francophilia, but without gushing. Rather than rococo strains from Versailles parlors, they preferred the look of

a French beach house. "No Louis XV, no English chintz, no fuss," Leanne says. "Our goal was to live and entertain with more fluidity so our friends and family [including two preteen children] could feel at home all over the house."

Comfort was key, yet Leanne's propensity for things European inspired a more sophisticated atmosphere. Thus a rare 18th-century French cartoon—a prototype painting for a tapestry—graces the entry and antiques abound, but the pieces are tempered by rustic rather than glamorous architectural features. Exposed ceiling

RIGHT: Giving the door to the new screen porch a dark stain enhances the kitchen's timeworn look. BELOW: A farmhouse sink strikes the right country casual note. OPPOSITE: The kitchen's big, open floor plan takes its design cues from Provence. Putting the table in the middle of the room eliminates the need for a breakfast room. Like most of the other pieces in the house, the table and chairs are 18th-century country French.



beams lend rugged character to rooms, and Leanne worked with a master cabinetmaker to finish the kitchen cabinetry to the desired state of imperfection. "For the island, we chose a French apple green as the room's punch of color," she says. "We wanted it roughed-up a bit to indicate wear from age. Then we rubbed it with gold to get exactly the look we wanted."

The use of one intense color in an otherwise neutral kitchen is a typical French approach, as is the open floor plan. "You have to know when to have the violins and strings soft in the background and when to let the timpani drums have their say," MacArthur says.

Incorporating authentic French detailing was one of the Shaws' priorities. To get it right, Leanne worked extensively with interior designer Laura Walker, who lived in Italy when she began consulting on the house. "Laura really trained me, and I did much of the research myself," Leanne says. "I had visited her in London and in Milan, and we even traveled through Europe





together. When she returned to Atlanta, we hit the ground running."

Leanne's research inspired a wrought-iron balcony and a striking hipped ceiling lined with 1x4s in the master bedroom. Doors throughout the house also received a stain treatment rather than paint. And the exposed ceiling beams in the family room and screen porch are clustered together in true French fashion. "The beams in France have a real structural purpose, so there are tons of them," MacArthur says.

The Shaws couldn't be more delighted with their house's defection to French architecture. Now their collection of antiques feels at home and the couple is finally at peace with their surroundings. ❖





THIS PHOTO: A classic canopy frames a modern upholstered bed in the master bedroom, proving that opposites do attract. OPPOSITE: An antique settee and a crystal chandelier add glamour to the master bathroom. For continuity, the tub's paneled surround features the same distressed finish as the kitchen cabinets.