



Still Life

A silver pitcher filled with snapdragons forms a pretty still life with a pair of watercolors in mismatched frames behind it.

CHARM of *Provence*

Antique French fabrics and old-world furnishings add sophisticated flair to this home.

Written by CHARLOTTE SAFAVI Photography by LU TAPP
Styling by ROBIN TUCKER



Seeing Red
A toile balloon shade covers a window in this guest room, outfitted with twin beds whose headboards are upholstered in Belgian linen. The silver teapot was made in the 1930s by Roxanne Packham's great-grandfather.



The longtime family home of interior designer Roxanne Packham exudes plenty of *je ne sais quoi*. One look at the mix of antique French furnishings, fabrics, and artwork indicates that this is a house lovingly designed and carefully curated over time.

"When my husband and I first married, we were stationed in Europe and often traveled to France," says Roxanne, who is descended from a line of American silversmiths. "A couple of years before that I'd spent a year abroad studying design at the Paris Fashion Institute. I'd fallen in love with all things French."

Roxanne began gathering French textiles and home goods in those early days ("I'd pick things up at flea markets and cram them into the car"). Her passion has continued over the years and her collections have grown.

Pet Friendly

This pooch-print fabric is new, but it has a vintage feel, *top*. It also contains the home's palette of neutral hues popping with red and blue accents.

Comfort Reigns

In addition to the ceiling woodwork, Roxanne redesigned the fireplace surround in the family room. Above the mantel hangs an old painting of the French countryside, *right*.





PUTTING DOWN ROOTS

Back in the States, the Packhams (Roxanne, Scott, and their two kids) settled in Camarillo, California, buying a Mediterranean-style house, which appealed to them because of its terracotta floors and French doors opening onto a landscaped yard. Roxanne, a diehard French-country fan, sought to create the look in her house. One of the first things she did was raise the ceilings to their rafters and install painted planks and rustic beams. She also plastered the fireplaces and added decorative wall coverings to some of the walls.

"I completely gutted the kitchen," recalls Roxanne. "I wanted a casual French-country style kitchen. The La Cornue stove became a focal point; it's pretty but it's also great for cooking. I custom-designed the hood, which is of dark-stained pine with ivy motifs."



Hanging Loose

Roxanne both collects and uses copper pots when cooking; she also loves wrought-iron accents, top.

At-Home Picnic

The Packhams like to entertain casually in their rustic kitchen and at its adjoining eat-in farm table. Wine and cheese are always at the ready, left.

La Cuisine

Roxanne designed the kitchen cabinets, right. Countertops are marble, a typically French material. A pair of leather stools with a fleur-de-lis pattern take their place as needed.





Traditional Terra Cotta

AUTHENTICITY Terra cotta has a unique textural finish that cannot be compared to the uniformity of ceramic or porcelain. “The older and more imperfect one’s floors are, the better the patina achieved and the stronger the old-world feeling evoked,” notes designer Roxanne Packham.

STAINING Though terra-cotta flooring doesn’t need to be finished, Roxanne prefers staining its natural orange hue to a darker brown. Her tip: Make sure you purchase unfinished, unsealed terra-cotta tile if you plan on staining. Then, simply uniformly apply a coat or more of the stain, depending on how dark you want to go, and let it dry.

SEALING Once stain is completely dry, finish with a matte sealer. Wax can be added for a high-gloss finish. Something Roxanne

suggests: Use caution with wax—the tiles can get very slippery when wet.

MAINTENANCE Sealed terra-cotta flooring is easy to clean with soap and water. “If you don’t like chips and cracks, this isn’t the floor for you,” says Roxanne. The tiles tend to chip easily if you drop something heavy on them, but some people like the aged look. Once chipped, you simply add a little stain and a dot of wax to finish it off.

INSTALLATION Be creative. Tiles can be cut up and used as a border, such as what Roxanne did in her kitchen. A fireplace surround could benefit from such a treatment, too. Or, you could create a rug design in an entryway. You can also incorporate antique or imported terra-cotta tiles into a special pattern.

Two by Two

Twin upholstered and monogrammed bergère chairs sandwich an antique French buffet that serves as storage and a bar, above. Curtains have a playful pompom trim.

Farm to Table

The French farm table was a present from Mom. Roxanne picked up antique French chairs with rush seats to go with it, opposite.





WITH A FRENCH ACCENT

The kitchen also has minimal upper cabinetry, café blinds, and a rustic herringbone-brick backsplash behind the stovetop. Accessories include collections of French copper pots and baskets. "I especially love collecting antique French textiles," says Roxanne. "I started buying bits and pieces years ago. I still enjoy finding old French fabrics and mixing them with newer ones." Roxanne may layer a bed with custom pillows made from toile that she's held onto for years, as well as a vintage matelasse. Her occasional chairs, especially the shapely bergère ones, are often upholstered in fresh French-inspired checks and patterns.

Tête-à-Tête

Sometimes when the house is full, Roxanne retreats to this pretty space, above, to have a cup of tea with a girlfriend. The table is an antique French card table with elegant curved legs.

Sweet Detail

The carved mirror looks old but isn't. The coffee table, however, is an antique crate that once was used for chocolate shipments, opposite.



"I love the warmth of French country and its unpretentiousness."



Instantly Refreshed

A toile paper ensconces the walls and ceiling of this charming powder room. Roxanne had the basin fitted into an old desk for a one-of-a-kind sink.

LOVINGLY MADE BY HAND

Other things that lend Roxanne's home character and depth are its handcrafted items. For example, she lugged back a pair of antique French buffet doors and had a local craftsman make a matched pair before turning all the pieces into a custom-designed sideboard topped in marble. You can see more of Roxanne's design ideas at sunsetandmagnolia.com.

Summing up her style she says, "I like an old-world feel, but nothing pretentious: dark woods, beautiful fabrics, objects made by hand. It lends my home a refined French look."



Dreamscape
A Baker bamboo and iron bed is adorned with vintage flour sack pillows and a Ralph Lauren quilt. The tufted-velvet bench is a luxe touch.