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INTRICATE AND AUTHENTIC DETAILS FROM THE GROUND UP BRING THE CHARACTER OF PASTORAL FRANCE TO AN UNLIKELY DESTINATION.

Translating BEAUTY

BY **ELISE PORTALE**
PHOTOGRAPHY BY **ANICE HOACHLANDER**

THE RELAXED BEAUTY OF THE FRENCH COUNTRYSIDE GIVES HOMES A QUALITY ALL THEIR OWN. From the riverside homes of the Loire Valley to the lavender fields of Provence, the terrain lends its style to both architecture and décor. When two clients wanted to experience true pastoral France—inside and out—without leaving Washington, D.C., how did they capture that rustic essence? They decided to call upon architect Anthony "Ankie" Barnes, principal of Barnes Vanze Architects, Inc., to bring the atmosphere of Dordogne to D.C.

FORMING THE FAÇADE

With streets lined with Victorian and colonial homes, Washington, D.C., isn't known for country vistas. But Ankie's clients knew what they wanted. "The clients had traveled in southwestern France and loved the informal architecture of that region, especially the Dordogne," Ankie says. "They had some images of charming and rustic country houses with informal façades, entry porches, casement windows and shutters."

It quickly became clear to Ankie that creating a country paradise in the nation's capitol meant starting from scratch with authentic ideas. "Designing a successful 'French'-style house in northwest D.C. includes a leap of faith," Ankie explains. "To make a success of this endeavor, we felt that the most authentic use of materials, techniques of construction and proportion were needed." Using towers, French casement windows and unique roof shapes, Ankie picked the details directly from the source. "Studying various regional styles and settling on one that had a lower scale (for a fairly large house) was key, as was the use of the natural materials: wooden shingle roof, natural stucco and stone walls, reclaimed oak beams for the entry porch and lintels over doors and windows," he says.

> "DESIGNING A SUCCESSFUL 'FRENCH'-STYLE HOUSE IN NORTH-WEST D.C. *INCLUDES A LEAP OF FAITH.*"

[BELOW] THE TUMBLED-STONE ENTRYWAY is a continuation of the same materials and patterns from the driveway. This adds a dusty, earthy quality to the first impression of the home while maintaining a nice continuity with the exterior.

All of these details combine to form a home that looks as if it had been picked right off of a Provençal hillside. Soft stone paving draws the eye from the street and melts into the warm tones of textured walls. Ankie worked with landscape architects to bring this resplendent paradise to life. "We chose a native stone that suited the palette chosen for the house for the stone in the wall—and in the house walls—and used a tumbled stone cobble for the courtyard paving," he says.

BESPOKE ANTIQUITY

The design is no less impressive inside, with exposed wood beams, patinaed touches and artfully crafted custom details reminiscent of a countryside chateau. The kitchen, with its palette of warm woods and worn teals, appears to have been salvaged. In reality, only one piece in this

AN ANTIQUE HERALDIC CREST from Spain is a personal touch added by the homeowners. While the crest isn't strictly French, it lends classic European regality to the striking mantel, the perfect cherry on top of this rustic retreat.

expansive space is antique. "[The clients] already owned the antique French butcher's cutting block on the left side of the kitchen," Ankie says. "The rest we designed and had made to look and feel like furniture. Antique, reclaimed white oak was used for the island top, and the cabinets were designed in various styles to feel like found pieces." One of the more defining features, the curves and points of the custom open cabinetry, took its inspiration from the clients' photo of some antique French gothic cabinets in a hotel in Avignon.

While open beams and custom countertops are commonplace in rustic homes, Ankie went even further to recreate a true country kitchen. "The two-tiered beam ceiling structure was inspired by

WITH ITS ANTIQUE AESTHETIC, it may be hard to believe that this kitchen is all newly fabricated. The authenticity of this space starts with the design itself, with what Ankie calls a "pieces of furniture" look blending seamlessly with the only true antique in the room: the clients' French butcher block.

the farmhouse interiors I that have seen and know in Provence," he explains. "Together with the 'pieces of furniture' design and layout of the kitchen, it gives a feeling of an informal French country farmhouse kitchen."

Attention to detail and craftsmanship were the *pièce de résistance* of Ankie's pastoral paradise. An arched fireplace anchors the library and dining room, and while the worn-wood piece paved with tiles must surely be from an old French farmhouse, it, too, is one of Ankie's bespoke additions. "The fireplace was custom designed and made for the house," he explains. "We were inspired to use a gothic pointed arch here since we had designed the gothic-arched cabinets in the kitchen. We used antique barn beams that were reclaimed from Pennsylvania for the old wood used and then added matte-glazed terra-cotta tiles to make the surround."

From the tumbled stone driveway to the reclaimed wood ceilings, Ankie's masterpiece truly takes a slice of provincial life and nestles it in an unlikely place. And while the inspiration has been taken far from its native land, there's no doubt about it: This country chateau is truly right at home. FS