



Design: Slaughter Design Studio, LLC  
Photography by Michael Hunter

## Countryside Elegance

*French country interiors are a blend of many different design styles, all joining together to create a timeless space with feminine accents.*

By Moe Godat

### The Perfect Blend

French taste is marked by its blend of rustic, traditional and eclectic accents. Traditional floral motifs (characteristic of the popular Indian block printing) can bring both color and pattern to a space through bedspreads and table linens. Rustic touches mixed with high-end traditional antiques bring the feel of the French countryside into your home without overpowering each show-stopping piece.

### Found Furniture & Antiques

When choosing antiques for your French Country home, you don't have to focus on the piece's birthplace; rather than going for purely French designs, focus on the feeling that you want the space to evoke. Many antiques regardless of nationality have the curves, scrolls and crests expected from French influence. Finding pieces that bring personality to your home, especially ones that reflect your personal style, is what makes each space unique.

### Scale & Simplicity

Antique French furniture is often ornate. Each piece of furniture should make its own statement and not compete with other decorations. For example, design your space around one or two larger pieces to capture your guests' attention. Keep the rest of your interior muted or paired back to let these hero pieces shine, capturing the perfect combination of scale and simplicity of your French Country space.

### A Country Color Palette

To create a French Country color palette, start with a neutral base; the most common neutral to use in this style is actually called "French Grey." Pastels—such as washed-out sage green, sky blue or pale yellow—pair well with French Grey, but varying shades of blues are typically associated with French Country interiors. When a room needs more contrast, consider using a darker shade of blue to increase interest.



SWAT Design Team  
Photography by Anne Matheis



**Pro Tip:** Long, full curtains are a staple in French Country style; if curtains “puddle” on the floor, they can lend a relaxed, romantic feel.

### Charmed

To achieve a charming feel, make sure to mix old-world elegance with rustic touches. It keeps the space delicate without becoming too fussy or difficult to live in. Give each room (even those that aren't main living areas) the same care and attention to detail across the board to make each promote a cozy and welcoming air. Accessories, paintings, wallpaper and antique furniture all add to French Country charm through their individual character.

### Interiors Have Layers

Layering textures and patterns adds another dimension to these rooms and can often be found in fabric choices and wallpapers. If working with a small, exquisite print somewhere in the room, don't overpower it by introducing another print with the same level of detail. Pair a small print with pale solids or larger prints such as a stripe or check. If you're more interested in bold floral prints, choose cushions and fabrics in complementary colors to match.

### On Display

Use your tableware as a stunning display! An antique hutch or open shelving piece painted or refinished to match your color scheme will make the perfect backdrop for special occasion china. Now it can stun guests year round rather than just on the holidays.

### Just a Trim

Passementerie describes the trimmings, cords, tassels, borders, etc. found in French Country homes. Each of these small details add a finish of luxury to a fabric. Using passementerie is a great way to bring traditional accents into your design without limiting the space's functionality; for example, a pillow with tassels is still comfortable to lean on, and curtains with decorative trims still block unwanted light. To keep these additions from overwhelming, choose a dark or neutral color to complement your design and let the ornate pieces stand out. ■