

TRADITIONAL HOME.

RENOVATION STYLE

discover
Beautiful
potential
in the most
unlikely spaces



Faucets & Fittings

Elegant Kitchen Redo

**Redesigning
the Suburbs**



Walls in the entry
were painted, paneled,
and glazed to imitate
French limestone.
Honeycombed stone
sculpting further enriches
the overall, a replica
of a French place.
Simply gorgeous in
anyone's house.

Simply
différence

M

ost Americans love their ancestral heritage and honor it in some small way—old-world antiques, for example, or crafts from the family homeland. Likewise, most good homes reveal something of their own ancestry. Here's a case in point: a suburban Kansas City home with hints of France and traces of tropical Atlantic flair.

"It had always been known as the home from the Bahamas," says the current owner, interior designer David Griffith. "With classical siding and a white-trimmed roof, it really did look like it was in Nassau."

The home didn't have any glaring flaws (see "Recognizing potential" on page 15), and David utilized that potential

"to push the French a little bit farther." A gentle nudge launched the reconfiguration.

"The house just cried for French doors," Griffith explains. "That was the starting point."

NOTE: A gift above the entry is at the entrance of the original Nassau home. The circular staircase, a French antique, adds drama and function.



David Griffith, interior designer, in front of his home.



A second story
great room (shown
here) opens to the
first floor. The
ceiling features
a white-trimmed
roof. The
fireplace was rebuilt
after the original
fire was rebuilt.

The sitting room, built into an old porch, looks like a family room. Antique seats were used to give new, masculine looks to the family room beyond. "Then they were covered with several glasses to get the same feeling as the old ones." David says.



Since then, custom French doors have replaced almost every window—50 in all, each 6 feet tall. The grand plan, however, stayed much the same. It would extend both wings on the front of the house by 11 feet, add terraces and a guest street in back, eliminate an upstairs bedroom to allow a two-story living room, and create a grand courtyard with a broad tree wall.

"Once we had the wall up, it became over time French," David says. The area is the courtyard, painted in custom terra-cotta, gave him "the feeling of Versailles," recalling the palace of Louis XIV.

"The whole feeling we wanted with the house was like we had taken an old overbuilding on a large street in Provence," David says. "It could have been a caretaker's house or a stable converted into a house. That is one of the reasons for the lanterns along the top of the walls and the tiled floor. That is what we wanted to capture, the sort of rustic elegance of the French-country style."

Addressing some needs largely for convenience, which the house does with European grace, David and partner Roger Wiley, an architectural designer, have heated garage of 100 and more. Before and after floor plans show how considerably they exceeded the home's surroundings capabilities.

A key in the plan means is the sunny sitting room that serves as old porch and provides a convenient path to the new family room, so traffic can proceed through the dining area. More than a hallway, the sunny room offers a clarity



Before



After



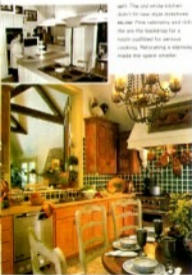
4800: Before colors and a courtyard and gave the renovated house a new sense of unity compared to the "Before" image it had before. Right: Wings on each side of the courtyard were extended 11 feet to create space.

spot for breakfast, eggs or the living areas, dining room, and family room. For large parties, David says, "we sit it up for a bar and cocktail. Traffic flow is very important."

Lin importance was an open-plan area that was sacrificed to give kitchen, height and volume to the living room. The main function here is handled by a new, green-glass stone stacked fireplace. "The house is still a three-bedroom house with three and a half baths," says Ryan. "It's not an open-plan house."

"They raised the living room ceiling one full story and moved the floor one step. The floor originally had five sections, a step lower than the story level, but with careful milling above, a new subfloor and soundly flange over. Raising the floor caused other problems, notably a turret to rise and rebound the living room fireplace. This 'domino effect' challenges contractors who may be required to work around a problem rather than correct the time and money necessary to set it right. But challenge by challenge, David and Ryan got things right.

With the old white kitchen kept for use when necessary, Ryan's new kitchen and tile are the backdrop for a more sophisticated serious cooking. "Materializing a structure made the space smaller.



The dining room table sets from 8 feet to 12 feet for one good big dinner, a Portuguese painted cabinet that it's just too "there come and go around here, but certain people we have to stay," David says.



Textured wall sconce

When the house was opened, the contractor was told to keep the house as close to the original as possible. "The house was built in the 1920s and was a very high quality house," says Ryan.

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They kept a storage of the former second floor in a loft above, perched atop a slightly raised and well-worn staircase—hence, France, of course. A local ironsmith installed the antique iron railing to create the loft's handrail. It's a charming space, but the loft's real purpose is to enhance the

living room. "The living room feels less interconnected with the balcony," David explains. It's a space consideration. "If you walked straight into a two-story living space, the staircase would be gone." Large, open great rooms, so popular in recent years, "are the latest fad," he laments.

In contrast, the living room's loft and balcony create a visual break, an interruption accentuated by moldings because the smooth ceiling and the heavily textured walls. They suggest a comfortable ceiling height, but they also allow the access of a great space.

David's brother made the shelves that frame windows around the top of the living room. These windows—they once served the upstairs bedrooms—now peer southward into the living room. The light plays on the deeply textured walls, contrast with a heavily crisscrossed network of cement and plaster over drywall. The effect resembles old-world plaster or stone.

Living room furnishings mix a variety of accents gathered on travels in France. They range from primitive to refined, which gives the interior a sense of breadth and timelessness. As David says, "I like the feeling of a living room that our generations shared of work."

Like the living room, the renovated dining hall stands taller than before. Its former 10-foot ceiling stretches another two feet into the old attic space. "It could have gone either way, but I didn't want to lose the structure," Roger says. Antique beams, restored from a Pennsylvania salvage company, add warmth and a sense of tradition.

The renovated bedrooms gained a new overhead light. They utilize, likewise, the old bedrooms' door, gave way to French doors. Bedrooms furnishings mix French, English, and contemporary pieces.

THE HOUSE *captures* THE RUSTIC
ELEGANCE OF FRENCH-COUNTRY *style.*

"Textures, patterns," and glazes give the walls their French accent. In the kitchen and in the great wing, walls showcase a glass-and-stone technique that has a look and feel of antiquity. The living and dining rooms have identical wall surfaces, but differences in the glazing make the dining area appear more reserved. The living room has a subtle pattern, lines begin to emerge, and the dining room ranges from serene to subtle. "If you saw the two rooms without the colors, they would look alike," says David, who did the glazing himself. Woodwork and walls in the dining room have a crackle finish to simulate age. "We do paint to wearing off," he says.

Almost all ceilings are higher than before, but their heights vary from room to room. The new finishes enhance the illusion that the house has grown gradually in many generations of changing needs. That's part of its farmhouse character. It's an illusion David and Roger embrace at every opportunity.

In the kitchen, for example, pine cabinets replaced a contemporary glass-and-white kitchen. "The top cabinets are stained darker than the bottom ones, open for that added no-linking," David says. "Wooden countertops resemble chipping blocks. And, instead of an island, the



Sunlight glimmers on the cushions of a new entry area inside the porch. Space inside the great quarters resonates with echoes of rustic French. Sometimes isn't initially a matched set, the guest house is now attached by a window-lined loggia.

Flourish

Great Room, Paris, France

When a house is built, it is often with a view to the future. The house in Paris, France, was built in 1950 and has since been renovated to reflect the style of the 19th century.

The house is a beautiful example of French architecture. It features a large central hall, a grand staircase, and a large dining room. The house is surrounded by a beautiful garden and is a true gem of the Parisian architecture.

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