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# LIVING LODGE

*Interior designer David Griffith  
creates a warm and cozy winter home  
for himself and partner Roger Pilley*



Two views of the expansive living room. Directly over the main entrance  
a great space filled with comfortable seating and rustic antiques.

BY L. PATTERSON CARROLL | PHOTOS BY BOB GREENSPAN



Wood & wire carved out for the kitchen cooking is backed by rustic tile and topped by a rough plaster chimneypiece over the exhaust hood. Griffiths and Piley raised the roof as a bonus perch to create the spacious dining room.

These decorative stone squarrels perched on trees of the 1992 ranch house that Kansas City designer David Griffiths and his partner, Roger Piley, remodeled as their 13th home ("And although I've said it before," Griffiths sighs, "this one really will be the last") are more than just quaint ornaments for the Leawood home's entrance:

"We've started to call this house 'Squirrel Hill' for a couple of reasons," says Griffiths, looking out the door toward a neighborhood filled with long-established trees. "One reason is that there are lots of squirrels in the area gathering pinecones. And the other is that everyone in here is just a little bit nuts." Friends of Griffiths and Piley, who have seen them, over two decades, turn one visually boring house after another into architectural showpieces, might agree. It does seem a bit nutty to spend innumerable hours carefully recreating the look of a provincial French villa in what had once been a low-slung ranch house, only to move on to yet another project as soon as the house is finished.





THE GREAT ROOM (LEFT): Glass doors pull back to open the garden view to the pool area. An outdoor fireplace by the pool provides warmth on cool evenings.

keeping the finer French pieces, like the glasses and table, but using them with more things to create a more casual, more American look."

An American "Spiced Blend," as it were, with the best of wood and warmth table to their parents' home. Slipping past the boys into a large living room created from what once been two Eisenhower era "puff" rooms—a living room and family room—Goffick shows off a space that captures the look of both a luxurious Adirondack lodge and a very Western prairie cabin. But it's a fantasy version of both, in which beautiful antiques and half tables mix to create simple design with something very glamorous. And glassware requires, in the very least, a

In a little over a year, Goffick and Piley transformed the three-bedroom Lacawood ranch, which they purchased from an architect "a practice condition," Goffick explains, "He had done a lovely job, including refinishing all the hardwood floors, but it just wasn't our best."

The house, much smaller than the five-bedroom French manor they had just sold, appeared to Goffick, "It was time to downsize our lifestyle," he said. "We sold a lot of our furniture,



**SEE ALSO:** Beaded valances provide an intimate note in the rear of a massive carved-wood bed. **SEE:** French doors lead from a bedroom to the garden room; **SEE:** Roger Piles, left, and David Griffith in front of liquor bar.

formed dining room, which wasn't in the house's original plan.

"We took what had been a screened-in porch," said Griffith, "and raised the floors, built walls and added French doors."

The walls of this room were painted in a honey shade. Soft, earthy tones predominate throughout the house, so that colorful accents stand out. The dining room, however, is distinctly less so: In fact the other rooms thanks to the old English oil paintings, the French side table topped in red marble, a 17th-century Irish pine sideboard and elegant silk draperies woven with a French country scene in cream and pink/reds. The striking antique beaded chandelier mounted, along with Piles and their two bearded calves—elephant and Zee—



from the previous house to reconstruct.

"This house actually combines all the elements of our other homes," said Griffith, an unattached Francophile who had to tone down his love for all things French for the new home's interior, although the reconstructed kitchen would look perfectly comfortable in a true Tuscan farmhouse.

What had once been a shy 1970s-week kitchen was expanded and given the architectural cream of a French restaurant: silver granite counters, Italian tile backsplash, a black ceramic farmhouse sink, pine cabinetry. >>>>>>>>





rooms. There, extra tiles lead from the foyer throughout the home's public spaces. Antique French glass and a mounted deer-head add to the country atmosphere.

wood-paneled) and antique hardware that adorned a more rustic screen in the French countryside to feel new life in the Kansas suburbs.

Critch and Riley ripped out three stucco fireplaces and kept one, in the spacious living room, where they faced wall-to-wall glass. The room's oak-plank floors are clear with Mexican tiles, and the room's most theatrical elements are the wood carpet woven to resemble antique beds and the long, long antique table that looks like it could have been built for storing hunting gear, rather than its actual historical use as a surface for eating meals of silk.

A few steps away is the indoor-out-

door room. Critch calls the "garden room," although the sunny space has an unexpected character-like quality. During the summer, glass doors slide back, making the room an open-faced extension of the living room. Critch furnishes the space with comfortable-wicker pieces, on which guests can gather only steps from a heated swimming pool. In cooler weather, she closes the room down to a transformed new space sitting room with more substantial European furnishings, and inspires dried herbs are hung from the ceiling's wood beams.

"It's a smaller house than some of our other homes," said Critch, "but it's still wonderful for entertaining."

And as it goes, the house has a subtle, mixed quality. The pocket of Kansas countryside in the city is a place that only the neighborhood of the sweeping square—go-to share. **W**

real smiles

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