



Personal Style
Bursts of red and green add a lively mood to the living room's neutral color scheme. "By sticking to whites, I can use mismatched pieces I love thrown together in a pleasing way," says Lidy.



Lined Up
A striped pillow subtly echoes the horizontal slats on a nearby shutter and provides a nice contrast to the chair's vertical lines.

Timeless ELEGANCE

A California antiques dealer brings a bit of France to America. In the 13th century, when a local duke granted Eindhoven, Holland, the right to hold its first farmer's market, the quiet riverside village boasted twenty lanes dotted with small cottages. Thanks to its growing textile and tobacco businesses and location on a major trade route, the village grew into a thriving fortified city.

In the mid 20th century, large homes owned by gentlemen merchants lined the cobblestone streets. At the rear of these stately townhouses, flower-filled gardens provided refuge from the hustle and bustle of city life. It was in one of these large stately homes that California antiques dealer Lidy Baars was born. Surrounded by beautiful French furniture and family heirlooms, from an early age Lidy appreciated the joys of a welcoming and gracious home.

"When I was eight years old, my mother and I moved to America," says Lidy. "But memories of my grandmother's home followed me across the sea."

For the next decade, Lidy returned to Europe each summer to live with her grandparents. Together, they frequently traveled to the family's villa in the woods for leisurely days spent with

Written by BUNNY MACINTYRE Photography by JOHN ELLIS Styling by SUNDAY HENDRICKSON



Un, Deux, Trois

A timeworn shopkeeper's organizer now holds office essentials and trims. Chalky white stenciled or vintage house numbers lend typical French flair.

Stock Up On Pillows

A pile of plump pillows encourages any sofa to whisper, *take a seat*. Lidy collected grain sacks, ticking, and toile to turn into an eclectic display. Focus on one accent color such as red to keep the look relaxed.

Hold Everything

A vintage wire file basket corrals coffee table items. Since the best vignettes have items in close proximity, Lidy uses folded tea towels to raise the fruit bowl to the proper height.



her uncles, aunts, cousins and family friends. The villa, decorated by her grandmother, typified relaxed French style. "The rooms' pale neutral colors, slightly timeworn pieces and white linens are what I've adored ever since then," Lidy explains. When she was 15, she also met and fell in love with her future husband.

"Although we'd been around each other for years, I suddenly noticed John, the son of one of my mom's best friends. I thought he was the nicest boy I'd ever met," she says. Four years later, John and Lidy were married and settled in California.

A HOME OF HER OWN

"I always wanted a house that was warm and inviting, the kind of house you'd like to have tea and cookies in," Lidy says. "We moved five times before finally finding our current home. This cottage was smaller than we wanted, but the lovely garden and beach town location really sealed the deal for us."

The décor is basically traditional, but with a relaxed, French twist. The colors are neutral with all the whites and creams that Lidy loves—plus lively red accents. Antiques, sentimental furnishings and a sprinkling of country pieces are thrown together in a pleasing way.



Practical Charm

A large ottoman doubles as coffee table. Topped with a large tray, it's ideal for serving afternoon tea or a country breakfast of sweet rolls and coffee.





Recipe for Success

John, the family's top chef, enjoys cooking from recipes that have been handed down for generations. He also created the decorative floor pattern. "Careful measuring is the key to success for both," he says.

MAKE IT FRENCH

Step up your kitchen's style with a painted floor.

YOU WILL NEED:

- * Sandpaper (#220 and 400)
- * Tack cloth
- * Roll of paper for pattern
- * Pencil
- * Blue painter's tape
- * Good quality paintbrush or roller
- * Latex water-based paint in desired colors
- * Water-based lacquer (varnish) in semi-gloss or gloss finish,

METHOD

1. Start with a clean floor. Check overall condition of your floor. If there are water stains or worn-out spots, sand lightly with #220 sandpaper and re-stain if needed. Let dry.

2. Sand. Lightly sand your floor with #400 sandpaper. Vacuum floor to remove dust. Use a tack cloth to remove any leftover sand dust.

3. Decide on the pattern and colors. Choose the colors and pattern for your floor, and draw it out on paper so that you can get a good idea of what it will look like. Apply blue painter's tape, using a measuring tape to space out the pattern, for the first color of paint you will apply.

4. Paint. Use a good brush or roller for your paint. You can buy acrylic, oil-based or latex water-based paint. Lidy and John used latex paint because it's easier to use, dries faster, and wears well. Paint the squares or areas in that color and let dry overnight.

5. Repeat painting. In the morning, carefully remove the tape, then tape off the areas or squares for the second color. Repeat Step 4 for this color of paint, let dry, and remove the tape the next day.

6. Varnish. Apply several coats of water-based lacquer (varnish) either in semi-gloss or gloss, depending on what you prefer. Let dry between coats. John and Lidy applied five coats, because this floor is in the most-used part of their home.

7. Care. Clean your floor just as you would any other wood floor.

A Bit Bistro

Old and new, elegant and homey, the kitchen combines the best of French farmhouse style.





Garden Gleanings

Lidy's favorite flowers inspired her bedroom's décor. Antique carved bed dressed in white linens feels peaceful and serene surrounded with a rosy bench, lilac throw, and floral screen.

RELAXED ELEGANCE

The back of the cottage is all about family. We have an old-fashioned European kitchen, with a table right in the center. "We practically live there; it's a happy place, at its best when its filled with the laughter of our children and grandbabies," says Lidy.

The kitchen opens onto the garden, where the family can enjoy meals at a large turquoise farm table under a romantic flower-covered pergola. "We really think of the garden as another room in our home," she says.

Lidy has come a long way from her childhood in Holland, but the influence of her European background is found throughout her house. "In Europe," she concludes, "we have lots of old homes filled with family pieces that have been handed down. Everything doesn't always match, but we make it work together with a few 'new' pieces. That's what gives European style—and our California home—its charm."

"I truly believe that if you follow your heart in decorating your home, you will end up with a haven for your family where precious memories are made."

Editor's Note: Lidy offers a personal collection of antiques and shabby French chic for home and garden at www.frenchgardenhouse.com



French Lilac

A picnic hamper bedecked with a shop sack holds just-picked lilacs at the foot of the bed. "They last only a day, but the scent is irresistible," says Lidy.

Beaux Arts

A gilded bedpost reminds Lidy of her grandmother's house. When you decorate with reminiscences and pieces that remind you of happy times, you can't go wrong.

Belles Fleurs

"Our cottage is quite small. We use the garden as an extra room," says Lidy. A wicker market basket holds a glorious bunch of blue delphinium.



In The Pink

A distressed wood potting bench waits by the back door for outdoor chores. Vintage flower frogs, clay pots and ornamental doodads create a pretty tableaux.