

Rediscovered Charm

From the kitchen to the garden, every space in this restored family home is meant to be enjoyed.





Sometimes, creating a space worth celebrating means starting from scratch. This was the case when Tracey and Dean D'Angelo purchased their home in a historic neighborhood of Washington, DC, and found it had undergone a number of changes. "What we basically did was try to put the house back to the original footprint," says Tracey, "because a lot had been done to it over the years." They took the house down to the studs and, in the process, uncovered details like the arched windows that were still visible from the exterior. "They had been drywalled over from the inside," Tracey says. "We were looking for them and had to rediscover them."

ABOVE: In the living room, an old bistro rock holds a collection of bread spoons that homeowner Tracey D'Angelo bought at markets in France. A collection of cheese striainers takes up the lower shelf, and the credenza beneath was from an old schoolroom in France.



- AS SEEN IN -
 FRENCH COTTAGE
 © HOFFMAN MEDIA 2019



Once the structure's original beauty had been restored, the couple turned to the task of filling the home with the same quiet charm they had encountered on their travels to Europe. "We've been to France a lot, and I just really love a casual French look," Tracey says. "But we also wanted it to be a comfortable family home, so things are a little bit eclectic and casual and not very styled."

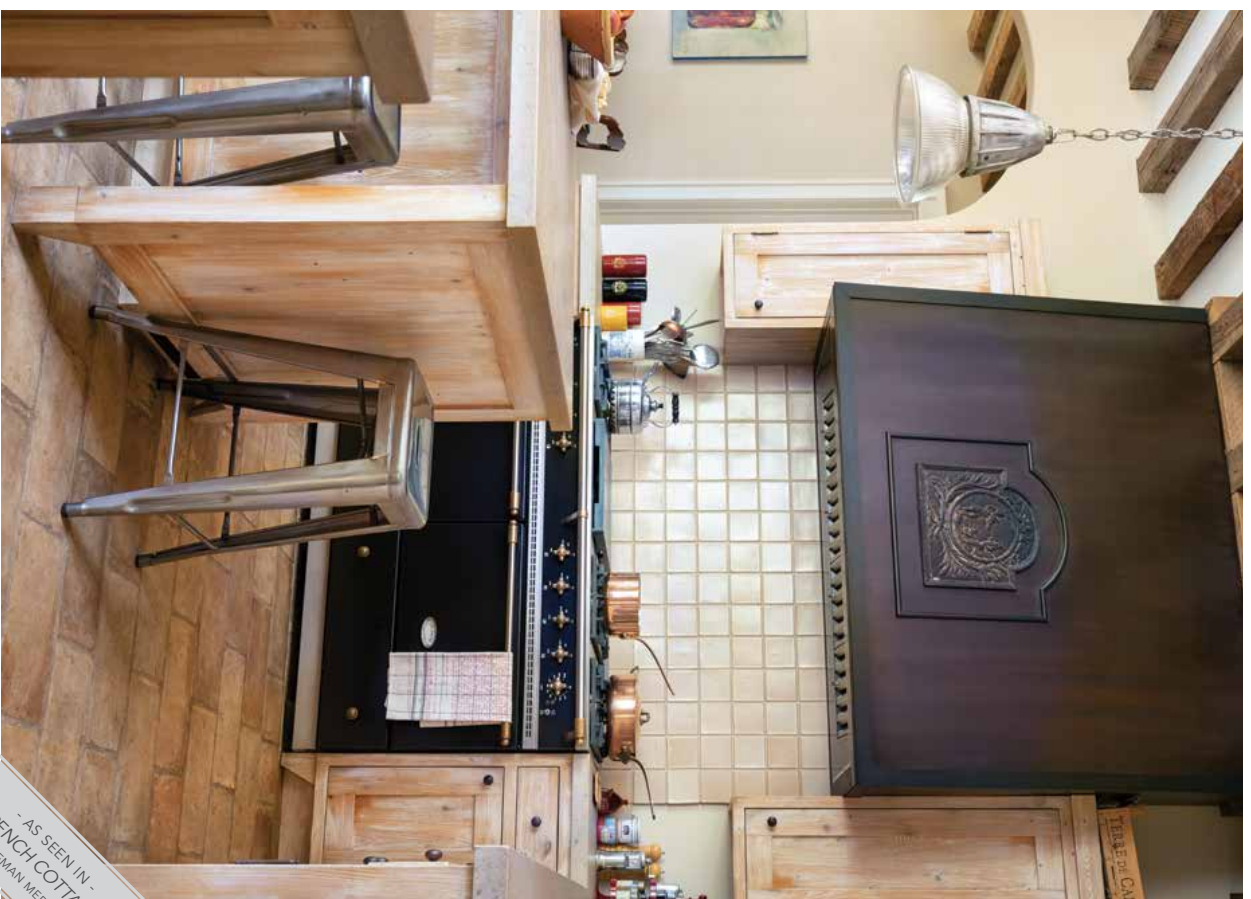
With the help of designer Loi Thai, they furnished the interior with French and Swedish antiques, pairing them with finishes and materials that make each piece seem right at home.

Antique terra-cotta tiles from France are the foundation for a kitchen and breakfast room that were designed to foster family memories as well as Tracey's love of cooking. "For me, the cooking is my favorite part of any big meal," she says. "And so, we wanted something that the whole family could be in together helping to prepare the meal."

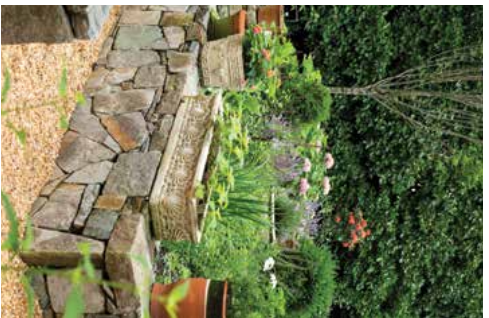
From the reclaimed wood beams on the ceiling and pendant lights recovered from a factory in France to the stove hood made from an antique fireback, the kitchen is the perfect place to enjoy meal prep with the D'Angelos' extended family—a weekly Sunday tradition. "We've managed to do it since our kids were babies, and they're now all young adults and teenagers," Tracey says, noting that gatherings can include 15 people and encompass both the kitchen and dining room, where an antique chandelier and a Swedish Mora clock provide timeworn charm.



Although the cabinets in the kitchen are new, the weathered finish of the wood fits right in with the home's antique spirit—as do the ceiling beams made from reclaimed barnwood. “That was something that was not original to the house,” says Tracey. “It was something that we just loved the look of.”



- AS SEEN IN -
FRENCH COTTAGE
 © HOFFMAN MEDIA 2019



Tracey notes that part of the challenge of creating their garden space was finding plants that would thrive in the climate while creating the look they wanted. "The whole idea was to have something that was warm and comfortable and had a very Mediterranean—or even West Coast—feel here in our East Coast, humid world," she says. The collection of pots and planters in the garden features a number of antique pieces, including some that came with the house, as well as pieces that Tracey and Dean acquired over the years.



Tracey recalls with some amusement a moment from when she first met landscape architects Leslie and Scott Fritz. "I had a magazine I bought from France and was showing them pictures of the casually elegant gardens [Dean and I had] seen and really loved there," she says. "And the first picture I showed them was a garden they'd actually worked on."

The D'Angelos' love of getting together over good food also influenced the design of the home's outdoor spaces, which Tracey says they wanted to be an "oasis of quiet and respite in a busy DC area."

They hired landscape architects Leslie and Scott Fritz to design the space, which now includes raised vegetable and cut flower gardens as well as a pizza oven that gets plenty of use on the weekends. "We really had to design this garden from square one," Tracey notes.

Where there was once decking and a disaster of plants, the yard now features stonework paths and boxwoods that provide the combination of casualness and structure the D'Angelos wanted to see.

"When it's nice out . . . I spend as much time outside as I can," Tracey says. But she and Dean make sure to enjoy every inch of their home—both inside and out. "We're people who really enjoy our home," she says, "and really celebrate all of the spaces." ❧

TEXT BY BEHANY ADAMS PHOTOGRAPHY BY GORDON BEALL