



# Entente cordiale

The best of English and French style has been brought to this house near Paris, creating a home full of joyful colour and pattern

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# **HALLWAY**

The colours in the artwork were used on the antique chest of drawers, painted by Tess Newall.

Artwork by Anthony Murphy. **Mirror,** Labyrinthe Interiors

With its elegant white facade, this charming French house, located just outside Paris, has an unexpected interior that exudes joie de vivre with its curated colour and pattern. The French clients relocated from London to France. 'They had rented properties in London, but this was their first proper family home,' says interior designer Sean Symington.

For Sean, it was his biggest project to date as it involved a comprehensive renovation and full refurbishment. 'It was one of those projects where it was supposed to be a light touch then it ended up being the whole house,' he says. 'It took two years and was full-on going back and forth to Paris.'

Structural work took place from the top to the bottom of the house. There was a complete reconfiguration of the top floor, where the children's bedrooms and a bathroom were created, while on the first floor, double doors were installed in the main bedroom to provide a bedroom, an en-suite bathroom and a dressing room. On the ground floor, the kitchen was moved to the other side of the room for better flow to the dining room and a much-needed boot room was built. The basement, with its beautiful brick ceiling, was developed so that it now houses a wine cellar, a pantry, a study and a gym.

The brief from the client was for an interior aesthetic that was almost English country house style, but this evolved as time went on. 'The brief changed as we started off with what the client thought she should do as opposed to what she actually liked,' notes Sean. The client's folky art collection soon took centre stage. 'It's so joyful with colour. It set the tone for what the house needed to be because the client is very bohemian, colourful and eclectic. She is very into artisanal pieces and the specialness of craft and didn't want it to seem decorated. Her wish was for it to feel like a family home that was collected and layered and incorporated pieces that had a sense of history and told a story, rather than everything being perfect, which is where it all started. Originally, we had matching wallpaper and curtains – it was

quintessentially preppy and curated – but that changed over time and it became much more eclectic.'

From the minute visitors enter the home, there's a hint of what's to come. Warm white walls provide a blank canvas for the vibrant artwork on either side of a chest of drawers, painted by decorative artist Tess Newall. Raspberry hues and sunny yellows provide joyful accents. 'We knew that the walls needed to be neutral because they had that pop of art and we didn't want them to be too busy,' says Sean. Threads of raspberry and yellow are woven through the rooms, complementing other colour palettes. The cloakroom showcases a yellow basin and a folk-inspired GP & J Baker wallpaper. 'It's an important print in the house because it dictated the tone of the ground floor,' says Sean. 'We used the print on the kitchen curtains and teased out the colours of the cabinetry, with the green and yellow on the island. It was the hero.' Yellow chairs and a striped raspberry ottoman continue the theme in the sitting room. Even in rooms decorated with a different palette, there are flourishes, such as the elegant vert de terre dining room with its display of antique yellow-glazed confit pots and raspberry red inside the glazed cabinets and the aqua snug with its raspberry accents. Upstairs, Sean has infused his hero hues into the main bedroom with a yellow end-of-bed sofa and hand-embroidered headboard fabric flaunting both colours and in the guest bedroom, yellow trailing fern wallpaper and curtain fabric form the backdrop to a canopy featuring raspberry pink fabric. Even the bathrooms pull the colours through with a yellow roll-top in the main bathroom and a raspberry red one in the children's bathroom. 'We were conscious of not having each room do its own thing,' explains Sean.

In a nod to the house's heritage, Sean has incorporated a wealth of pieces with a sense of history, such as the French antique furniture that, ironically, was sourced in England but has now returned to France – an echo of the clients' own journey. 📍

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#### SITTING ROOM

The reclaimed fireplace is very similar to the one in the dining room, ensuring a cohesive look. The old artwork inspired the colour palette. Footstool, Isabelle Baldwin; base in Preference Red, Farrow & Ball; covered in Zig Zag Stripe in Raspberry, Salvesen Graham

## DINING ROOM

The table is paired with mismatching chairs. 'They are designed to be robust for family life,' says Sean.

Victorian **table**, Tinker & Toad. **Chairs**, Ikea.

**Slipcovers in** Cavaillon, Pierre Frey. **Chairs in** Las Colinas Scenic Tapestry, Schumacher and Tree of Life with Cockerel, Chelsea Textiles. Hampton **chandelier**, Visual Comfort & Co. **Art**, Rosie Harbottle





#### KITCHEN

The handmade splashback tiles were sourced in Paris and echo the tone of the island for a cohesive look.

Cabinetry in Vert de Terre; island in India Yellow, both Farrow & Ball. Splashback tiles, Carrelages du Marais. Crinkly ceramic pendant; ceramic wall lights, both The French House



#### SITTING ROOM

This space adjoins the snug. Sean knew he wanted to create a 'chocolate-box room' and make it feel cosy. **Chair**, Sunbury Antiques Market; **covered in** Tali, Namay Samay at Tissus d'Hélène. Willa Check Large **wallpaper** in Seaglass, Schumacher. Rattan coffee **table**, Sharland England

#### OFFICE

Bold hues dominate the basement with its brick ceiling. 'The husband likes vintage pieces and folky art as well as cowboys,' says Sean. **Walls in** Green Smoke, Farrow & Ball. **Artwork** above sofa, Studio Hám. **Cushions in** fabrics by GP & J Baker and Sibyl Colefax & John Fowler. **Chair in** Kanthakat, Lewis & Wood



## 5 rules for CREATING STATEMENT BEDS

Sean Symington on beautiful sleeping spaces

1. Don't be afraid to scale up. A generously sized headboard in a fun, unexpected shape immediately draws the eye and sets the tone for the room.
2. A tailored or softly gathered bedskirt brings polish and softness to the base of the bed. It's also a great opportunity to introduce another fabric, or repeat one from elsewhere in the room to tie the scheme together.
3. For canopies, contrast is key. Pair a larger-scale pattern on the outside of the canopy with a smaller-scale print or ticking stripe on the inside. It adds depth and visual interest without overwhelming the space.
4. Adding swing-arm wall lights within the canopy is one of our favourite tricks. Not only does it bring in extra cosiness, but it is also endlessly practical for reading.
5. Think in layers. The most inviting beds are ones you want to dive into. Add quilts, throws, lovely linens, bed skirting and cushions in a mix of textiles and shapes to create a bed that feels collected and indulgent.



#### STAIRCASE

The runner stretches from the ground floor to the top floor stairs.

Newport New England Flooring; **trimmed in** Aluminium, Crucial Trading. **Wall lights**, Jim Lawrence. **Walls in** School House White; **spindles in** French Gray, both Farrow & Ball

#### MAIN BEDROOM

As this space is large, Sean felt a cosier wall colour was needed.

**Walls in** Light Blue, Farrow & Ball. **Headboard**, Lewis & Wood; **covered in** Ashenwood, Chelsea Textiles. French **sofa**, Sunbury Antiques Market; **covered in** Cybele Embroidery, Schumacher

#### BATHROOM

The yellow bath pops out against the muted colour palette.

Millbrook **bath**, Cast Iron Bath Company; **painted in** Sudbury Yellow, Farrow & Ball. Climbing Curios **wallpaper**, Common Room. **Stool in** Minack Check in Pale Blue, Colefax and Fowler

#### GIRL'S BEDROOM

A ditsy floral wallpaper provides a classic country backdrop.

**Joinery in** Blue Ground, Farrow & Ball. Bespoke **day bed**, Sean Symington. **Canopy in** (exterior) Mimi in Robin's Egg, Thibaut and (interior) Trickle in Salmon Ian Sanderson. Nutcracker **wallpaper**, Tess Newall

## BEDROOM

To break up the wallpaper, Sean added a canopy and used a fun folk-inspired fabric.

Scrolling Fern Silhouette wallpaper and fabric, Soane Britain. **Headboard** in Regatta, Lewis & Wood. **Canopy (interior)** in Tilly, GP & J Baker. **Table**, Priory Antiques Studio; **painted** in Inchyra Blue, Farrow & Ball. **Lamp** and **shade**, Penny Morrison