



# HILL COUNTRY

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# FRENCH COUNTRY

By MAURI ELBEL | Photography by MICHAEL HUNTER

*When Kimberly and Thomas Boyd wanted to get away from the bustle of Houston, they retreated to a quieter lifestyle in the beautiful Texas Hill Country.*





Their new home, nestled between Comfort and Fredericksburg on a phenomenal down-sloping property, soaks in expansive panoramas of rolling hills and valleys as far as the eye can see. “We really wanted to move to the Hill Country so that we could better enjoy its breathtaking beauty and be closer to family,” says Kimberly Boyd. “We bought here because the view is absolutely stunning. Every room in our home was intentionally designed by our builder, Richard Laughlin, to open up to big beautiful views of God’s magnificent creation for our family and guests to enjoy. In the morning when you wake up and look out, the hills and valleys simply come pouring in.”

Rustic yet relaxed with French Country overtones and touches of local vintage flair, the Boyd’s home is an amalgamation of their varied tastes that came together with the help of Slaughter Design Studio. To create the look inside their 3,100-square-foot, 3-bedroom, 2.5-bathroom home built by Laughlin Homes and Restoration, Amy Slaughter and associate designer Emily Rodgers’ biggest challenge was incorporating the couple’s existing items while bringing in a French Country aesthetic that spoke to both of their styles.

“Tom wanted whatever Kimberly wanted, or at least he thought he did,” recalls Slaughter.

But with a husband who gravitates toward a more masculine, simple style and a wife who likes quite the opposite — a feminine mix of shabby chic, lots of layers and ruffles and a French Country vibe — Slaughter worked to strike a balance which shows throughout the home’s interior. A light and neutral color palette exists throughout the home allowing for French Country undertones in spaces punctuated with eclectic pieces collected from Thomas’ international travels. In the family room, for example, numerous artifacts such as the geodes on the credenza and an engraved baleen whale jaw art piece from Alaska are displayed tastefully among more feminine elements like the one-of-a-kind antique French cartoon Slaughter found to tie into the French aesthetic Kimberly was going for.

Adding to the French Country feel, antique reclaimed wooden beams and columns selected by Laughlin Homes set off the open living, dining and family rooms which feature fantastic Hill Country vistas that pour in from expansive



windows. Concrete and hickory flooring flow throughout the house while exposed limestone walls bring the outside in. Walls, painted in Winds Breath from Benjamin Moore®, create a soft background and keep the palette neutral, a design move driven by the furnishings the Boyds wanted to maintain from their previous house. Most furnishings throughout the home are soft shades of grey, beige and green.

Slaughter strived to meet budget requirements, working closely with local artisan Tom Proch repurposing and refinishing many of the home’s furnishings.

“Because she wanted to use a lot of her own furniture, we had to find creative ways to reinvent it,” explains Slaughter. “The biggest challenge was to bring home this French Country aesthetic working with the things she already had. We had to find furniture to finish her home and she didn’t want to do that with new pieces so we looked for one-of-a-kind French pieces and salvaged pieces.”



For example, the Boyd's existing dining chairs were painted and slip covered with a gathered skirt to make them feel more romantic and the couple's masculine sofa was given a more feminine look with pillows reupholstered in French fabrics. Slaughter incorporated relaxed draperies using fabrics designed by Berber Kammlah and organic touches like dried lavender and manzanita branches to create an open and airy feel.

In the kitchen, an old French farm table obtained from local merchant Carol Hicks Bolton Antiquities serves as a center island which Tom Proch modified, adding to the legs and burying wires for the outlets.

"Sometimes they pull bar stools up to it to eat right there or they can use it to do their kitchen prep," says Slaughter. "Aesthetically, it is a nice contrast to the painted cabinets, hand-painted backsplash and custom wooden cabinetry."

Rahnee Gladwin and Cecilia Berber-Thayer worked closely with Slaughter and the Boyds on the kitchen splash which





features a traditional design with fresh colors. The hand-made, hand-glazed tile splash serves as the kitchen's focal point, says Gladwin, creating a statement that both speaks to the homeowner's tastes and complements the home's design.

In the master bedroom, romantic overtones abound. A French antique chandelier and an antique lace overlay from Kimberly's grandmother draped over the bench provide whimsical feminine touches. The draperies, a washed floral pattern on an oatmeal linen background, are soft and



romantic with brown tones picking up the wooden beams. The guest room was another space which conveys Kimberly's tastes, says Slaughter. Lace curtains and Belle Notte bedding provide a vintage look while fun, feminine furnishings fill the room: a headboard made of old cellar doors, an antique wine barrel night stand, an elegant antique statement chandelier draped with sparkling glass beads, and two reading lamps which were repurposed from accessories from the Boyd's previous home.

"You can see how feminine and romantic it is," says Slaughter. "It really is a fun room; very vintage."

"Since we moved here this is our favorite place to be primarily thanks to Amy

Slaughter and Richard Laughlin," says Kimberly. "Our life has simplified. Living here has allowed us to take a deep breath and relax and give thanks for the beauty that surrounds us." ❖

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