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—Simone de Beauvoir
Victoria Classics
FRENCH Cottage
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ON OUR COVER
Wisteria adds languid charm to a farmhouse in the French village of Bayet.
Photography Ton Bouwer
Styling Tanja Paff
Dear Friends

Whether its history-steeped architecture includes rough-hewn beams and stone floors or sweeping staircases and exquisite paneling, the effortless elegance of a traditional maison has a way of drawing me in time and again. In these gracious interiors, family heirlooms keep company with cherished artwork and intriguing brocante finds, allowing today’s homeowners to write their own chapters in the unfolding story of a beloved abode.

I never tire of poring over the Gallic inspiration presented in French Cottage, and it seems that each time I return to a previous edition, lovely details that had escaped notice before now catch my attention. Along with taking in the beauty of these spaces, I also relish exploring the heritage that makes each residence, from farmhouse to château, a treasure worth celebrating.

In this Victoria Classics issue, we revisit favorite homes from the last few years. In “Preserving Past Grandeur” on page 55, retreat to the gently rolling landscape of Burgundy to marvel at a hunter’s pavilion–turned–manor house. Dream of settling into a cozy guest room at the bed-and-breakfast highlighted on page 9 or at the medieval estate on page 65. And don’t miss the unexpected connection to their community that a Dutch couple discovered when they settled in the French village of Saint Révérien; find their feature, “A Sense of Belonging,” on page 85.

The charming havens showcased in this special edition continue to captivate us with their unmistakable sense of élan. We invite you to behold the many wonders that await!

Phyllis Jeffers Ackers
Editor-in-Chief
Coming Home to the COUNTRY

A yearning for a different sort of life led one Dutch couple to relocate to the small French village of Bayet and turn a long-neglected structure into a family home with holiday lets.
A wisteria vine drapes over the front door of Tanja Paff and Tim van de Tooren’s stone farmhouse, its clusters of purple blossoms wafting a sweet fragrance with every passing breeze. Freshly washed laundry dries on the line, illustrating one of the simple joys of country life. This was precisely the scene Tanja and Tim pictured when they decided to move here seventeen years ago—although the first time they glimpsed the house, it looked very different than it does now.

After years of neglect, the main building appeared to be quite run-down, with worn floors, peeling wallpaper, and layers of dirt, prompting Tanja’s mother
Opposite, below right: Iron beds left behind by a previous owner double as sofas in one of five guest rooms. Below left: Precious curios are gathered in the “treasure cabinet.” This page: A rose motif brings a bit of the garden to this room.
Opposite: A mix of cheerful prints lends country charm to the kitchen, which overlooks the courtyard—and the chestnut tree that captured homeowner Tanja Paff’s heart. This page, clockwise from above left: Tanja prepares home-baked treats for tea. Both breakfast and dinner are served in the dining room, which features a black-and-white patterned floor. She has gathered much of her old metal kitchenware, as well as a collection of vintage crockery, from local flea markets.
to declare it “a beautiful ruin.” Thankfully, it was structurally sound, just in need of a good cleaning, and there was plenty of space to accommodate their family of six, as well as for the bed-and-breakfast they wished to establish. “It wasn’t love at first sight with the house,” explains Tanja, “but when we saw the magnificent chestnut tree in the courtyard, we knew this was the place to start our new lives.”

Located in the Auvergne-Rhône-Alpes region, in an area once famous for its wine culture, the residence came with the name Les Echaloux, which is an archaic phrase for the wooden stake that supports a grape vine. Former renovations demolished many of the original features; only a granite mosaic floor was preserved. With their first guests expected just two months after they moved in, the couple began working in earnest to meet their deadline.

Tanja put her many handcrafting talents to great use in the refurbishment. Her grandfather’s gift of a sewing machine when she was a child inspired a lifelong love of stitchery, and curtains, cushions, and bedspreads throughout the home are evidence of her skill. She employs a practical-yet-beautiful philosophy in decorating and couldn’t be more pleased with the results.

“I remember seeing this place for the first time, and I felt sorry for it,” says Tanja. “I think we’ve turned it into the kind of home it was supposed to be—a genuine family home.”
Opposite: Whisper-soft linens promise peaceful slumber in the guest rooms, such as these cozy quarters just off the family room. With the exception of the bedside chair, all textiles were handmade by Tanja.
“I LIKE THINGS TO BE SIMPLE AND HONEST, NOT FLASHY.”

—Tanja Paff
When Dominique Delalande was bequeathed his family’s summer residence, built by his great-grandmother Marie in 1870, he fondly recalled time spent there in his youth: buying milk at the farm down the road, hunting and fishing with his father, and long walks with his siblings.
Henk Lokhorst’s upholstery work and the fireplace that he and Dominique installed lend warmth. Opposite: This lovely still life includes apricots from the garden.
Dominique Delalande and Henk Lokhorst call Amsterdam home but spend holidays in a cottage in a small village located in the Burgundy region of France. Henk is the decorator, combining heirlooms and antiques with elegant upholstery and *brocante* finds. And the home already held plenty of treasures. When Dominique’s mother moved here permanently many years ago, he says, “She brought the complete contents of her Paris household with her.”

The house was packed with furniture, Henk says: “Copperware, crockery, paintings—wherever you looked, there was something standing or hanging on racks, shelves, in benches, and dressers.”

When Dominique returned to the cottage, its décor, furnishings, sixties-era carpet, and even scents, awakened his memories. Even so, the clutter had to be cleared out, and antiques dealers were invited to the home. Not only were there generations of things to sort through, the house was also dark and outdated.

Dominique and Henk set to work updating the structure with the help of Dominique’s brother, who repaired the roof and rewired the home. A welcoming eat-in kitchen and a spacious en suite were added,
“The clock has always been on this spot,” Dominique says, “and the cabinet was a treasury of fabrics, lace, wool, and beads.” The tomettes—traditional floor tiles (this page and opposite, above right)—are original to the cottage.
Clockwise from above: Casual groupings of pottery showcase fresh vegetable tableaux. Just beyond the chair where Dominique’s mother used to sit is an alcove that once held shelves but now serves as a reliquary. A bouquet of vivid yellow sunflowers contrasts the muted backdrop of her piano, now painted white. Glass and silver shine against a rustic background that includes a seaside painting that she made while on holiday in Spain.
and gradually, the once-dark interior gave way to an airy, light-filled space. Interiors painted white and gray honor a color scheme found in the palaces of Louis XV. The result is a look that is clean and refined.

A graduate of an Amsterdam fashion academy, Henk is masterful with needle and thread. The curtains and cushions are his handiwork, as is the pièce de résistance—the romantic canopy in the master bedroom. Where he is the treasure hunter, Dominique tends toward a more minimalist style.

Today, the atmosphere is warm and inviting, and the best of Dominique's heirlooms are combined with artisan and vintage wares. Likewise, the décor is a harmonious mix of rustic authenticity and elegance: Robust pots, baskets, and iron birdcages sit alongside china, lace, and crystal.

“Old letters, antique monogrammed textiles, and beautiful crockery were once chosen by Dominique's family because they thought they were pretty,” Henk says, “and they used all of it. We use it as well, and by doing so, we keep the memories alive.”
“A PLATE MISSING A PIECE, A SHUTTER WITH PEELING PAINT—IT’S JUST BEAUTIFUL. A WEATHERED LOOK, THIS NON-PERFECTION IS TELLING A STORY. WHEN I LOOK AT AN OLD TEAPOT, I WONDER: WHAT STORIES COULD IT TELL?”

— Henk Lokhorst
Henk sewed the canopy, cushions, and curtains from fabric in toile de Jouy, this page and opposite, where a cabinet made by a local craftsman holds court.
Clockwise from left: This desk, where passionate antiques collector Henk displays vintage toys along the top, also stores letters, old notebooks, and family portraits, including an elegant photo of one of Dominique’s beloved aunts. Henk’s hand-stitched cushions, beautiful adornments that lend a nostalgic feel, perfectly complement heirloom shams edged in lace. Opposite: The deep green, vine-covered façade provides a lovely backdrop for the pink and purple blooms of this pleasure garden.
Love at FIRST SIGHT

For those who have an affinity for venerable, aging structures, crumbling walls and missing roofs prove no deterrent to acquiring them. As Emily Dickinson once wrote, “The heart wants what it wants.”
The long-neglected building in the heart of Auxerre, France, known as La Tour des Neiges (Tower of Snow) had witnessed centuries of Burgundian life when an urbanization project left it vulnerable to complete destruction. Located in the Saint Loup quarter, it occupied prime real estate between the venerable Cathedral of Saint Étienne, with its Episcopal Palace, and the Benedictine Abbey of Saint-Germain-des-Prés.

When Céline and Olivier Chollet discovered that this disintegrating edifice was for sale, they looked beyond the rubble, ruined walls, and steep price tag to see its potential. “We realized very well that buying this house wasn’t a clever idea concerning our budget, our time, and our energy,” she says. “But it was coup de foudre, love at first sight.” Céline, an artist known for her aquarelles of old houses, and Olivier, a history professor and headmaster, share a passion for art and antiques, and they embraced the possibilities—and pitfalls—that might lie ahead.

“We wanted the house to have its old character again, its genuine soul,” says Olivier. “By using old and
This page: A pitcher of pink roses clipped from Céline and Olivier Chollet’s garden brightens a corner of the salon. Opposite: Though not original to the house, the salon’s massive seventeenth-century stone-and-brick fireplace is the couple’s favorite gathering spot.
Opposite: A craftsman created additional panels to match the eighteenth-century decorative art piece. This page, above left: A blue bookcase stands in the entrance hallway. Cailette enjoys a nibble from her window perch, inset, which overlooks the inviting garden, above right. Below right: This hall exemplifies Céline’s decorative painting skills.

antique materials, we tried to approach the authentic atmosphere as much as possible.” They laid traditional tomette tiles on the kitchen floor and installed a reclaimed seventeenth-century fireplace in the salon. Flea-market excursions yielded beautiful doors and other fittings. When new materials were needed, the Chollets made sure to find sources in Burgundy.

Once structural fixes were completed, the two turned their attention to interior design. Céline drew on her painting talents to adorn walls, woodwork, and furniture, making each project a bespoke treasure—and the home a wonder to behold. “We wanted to create an interior in an elegant, warm country style—not being too precious or pretentious,” she says. “We are not looking for a homogeneous ensemble from a particular historical period but rather a travel across time, much like the journey of La Tour des Neiges itself.”
Clockwise from left: A bare-wood door offers contrast to the blue-and-white scheme. Delft and Nevers pottery mingle with assorted glassware in a vintage cupboard, while a cozy seating area ensures company for the cook. This artistic composition of vegetables will soon become one of Olivier’s culinary masterpieces. Opposite: The kitchen’s cozy dining space includes a happy mix of chairs, an old wooden bench, and a painted piano, which was moved in through a window.
Opposite and this page: The panel hanging on the wall of the master bedroom “is like a window with a view of the past.” Céline painted the walls and beams, and the corona is upholstered in the same fabric as the bed linens. The window frames the view to Cathedral of Saint Étienne, and toile de Jouy wallpaper and curtains underscore the French locale.
The Light Within: A VINTNER'S COTTAGE

With a keen eye and nurturing instincts, a Dutch florist put down roots in the heart of Burgundy and cultivated sun-drenched spaces where her family could blossom.
Floral designer Ita Bourcier remembers the moment, more than thirty years ago, when she spotted the cottage of her dreams in Auxerre, a capital city in the Burgundy region. Traversing the French countryside to search for a new home had become a weekly ritual for the Netherlands native and her husband. One day, their realtor had not selected any listings but encouraged the pair to peruse his files. A single image immediately captured Ita’s imagination.

“There it was: a photo of this wonderful house, surrounded by lots of trees and looking so pretty,” she recalls. Established circa 1880, when winemaking was prevalent in the area, the estate included wine cellars, horse stables, gardens, and a farmhouse brimming with charm.

Despite Ita’s instant connection to the property, several obstacles stood in the way of its purchase. The Bourciers were just starting out—she had just recently opened a flower shop in the village called Holland Fleurs—so their budget was modest. The picturesque estate had been handed down through the same lineage for generations and, unfortunately, was not on the market.
A whimsical culinary triptych calls attention to an English chest of drawers, a versatile storage option with ample surface for display.
THE HOUSE HAD A WONDERFUL ATMOSPHERE, THE SPIRIT OF A TRUE FAMILY HOME—EXACTLY WHAT WE WERE LOOKING FOR.” —Ita Bourcier
The china cabinet in this dining area was patterned after an existing built-in. Opposite, below right: Among the Bourciers’ crockery, the first bowl the couple purchased together remains a sentimental favorite. Above: Balancing contemporary lines and classic elements fosters a sense of casual elegance.
Glass windows and doors flood interior rooms with natural light. Opposite: Many of these shapely perfume bottles were gifts from friends.
Both passionate about gardening, Ita and her husband have invested countless hours into creating an outdoor oasis. Above left: A butcher’s table constructed by her father showcases a dramatic arrangement of blooming branches.

The heir and his wife, mutual friends of the agent, lived in Paris but escaped to the farm when on holiday. They agreed to offer a tour, and watching the young couple with their infant daughter, they softened. “The owner could see on the spot that we fell in love with his house. ‘There should be a family in here again,’ he said, and sold it to us for a very fair price,” Ita shares.

In the decades since, Ita has preserved the home’s legacy while adding her own touch. Original architectural details included dark oak beams, which she sandblasted to reveal the natural grain. Influenced by the northern style of her heritage, Ita brightened the interiors further by removing walls, adding windows, and painting surfaces white.

Modern updates blend with weathered finishes and antique furnishings to create an airy ambiance that seems ideally suited to the Bourciers. The haven also extends a welcome to their grown children and the many friends who come calling. “A house should fit you,” Ita maintains, “and this house does fit us.”
Above right and below left: Brightened with green plants, an intimate courtyard and the adjacent covered porch serve as popular gathering spots through spring and summer. Alfresco entertaining seems effortless in this breezy space, which is a converted garage enhanced by a custom steel-framed door. Below right: Showcasing a series of single blooms creates a simple yet impactful centerpiece. Opposite: Hand-painted berries, a raised border, and soft washes of color highlight Italian ceramics.
Preserving PAST GRANDEUR

Moving to peaceful Burgundian surroundings gave one equestrian couple the chance to indulge their interests in both horses and historic homes.
Ten years ago, Paris natives Marie-Claude and Michel de Beyris decided to leave the bustling pace of the City of Light for the tranquil beauty of Nièvre, a rural area of France’s Burgundy region. Because the couple is fond of old houses and of horses, their agent arranged a viewing at an eighteenth-century hunter’s pavilion-turned-manor house, complete with stables and a breathtaking view of the gently rolling landscape.

The setting alone was enough to command the attention of Marie-Claude and Michel. But when they stepped inside the château and glimpsed the light-filled interiors, where many of the original features have been preserved, they knew they had found their new home. Its peaceful ambiance outweighed the amount of work that would need to be done to restore the structure’s indisputable charm. Fortunately, the two had honed their renovation skills on their previous house, and they welcomed the challenge of the project.

The restoration took two years to complete. “We renovated the house with respect for its authenticity,” explains Marie-Claude, a decorative artist. “We wanted to preserve its original esprit.” They removed the...
Opposite, above: The main house was built in the late eighteenth century, while the tower was added in the early nineteenth century. Below: A horn once used during hunting parties hangs by the original staircase. This page: The couple’s day begins in this sunlit room, where silver and glassware gleam atop an antique cloth.
Clockwise from above left: A handmade shade crowns a reproduction lamp. At the back entry, a saddle used as décor reflects the owners’ love of horses. The wood floors and tomettes (tiles) are original to the house. Marie-Claude de Beyris painted the accessories displayed on the antique door fittings, and a traditional embrasse (tieback) adorns a curtain. Opposite: A trio of tones adds definition to the eighteenth-century paneled walls.
nineteenth-century chimneys, replacing them with eighteenth-century models, and performed several meticulous tests on the interior paint colors to match the three shades of gray that grace the walls and woodwork. Although age necessitated new heating, plumbing, and electrical systems, the wood floors and paneled doors needed only a bit of polish to bring back the shine.

Furnishings throughout the residence reflect the owners’ exquisite taste and appreciation for time-etched antiques. They have acquired most of their furniture, art, and curios from brocantes and auction houses, and it is their shared passion for curating these period pieces that brings character to the interior décor. The château bears soaring ceilings, and one of Marie-Claude’s friends made luxurious curtains to complement the tall windows.

In the west wing, two guest suites—the romantic Marie-Antionette and the fittingly equestrian-themed La Guérinière—are available for bookings, allowing the de Beyrises to share this idyllic place with others.

Above left: A cozy salon welcomes guests to relax with a cup of tea, while the gracious La Guérinière guest suite (above right, below left, and opposite) offers sumptuous accommodations.
Opposite and this page: The large windows in the Marie-Antoinette guest room look out to the peaceful countryside. Friends of the de Beyrises painted the headboard and made the curtains. A bedside table is covered with intricate lacework, and the eighteenth-century chair, opposite, retains its original upholstery and paint.
Self-proclaimed ambassadors of a centuries-old medieval estate, Jitske and Matthew Poventud have created a charmed life for themselves, their family, and a constant flow of houseguests.

A Noble Castle,
A NEW LIFE

Self-proclaimed ambassadors of a centuries-old medieval estate, Jitske and Matthew Poventud have created a charmed life for themselves, their family, and a constant flow of houseguests.
Château de Digoine’s private dining area offers a view of the kitchen framed by an elegant sandstone arch discovered during renovations.
American/Dutch couple Jitske and Matthew Poventud arrived in France with their three young children in pursuit of a dream. They wanted to begin a new life that would allow them to spend more time together in a place of serenity and unspoiled beauty.

After nine months of searching for a home, they discovered aerial photos of Château de Digoine, a magnificent medieval estate in the Burgundy region that had been neglected since World War II. The pair soon found themselves standing in utter surprise at the centuries-old gate marking the entrance.

Jitske and Matthew describe a rainy introductory tour of the grounds, during which they were guided by flashlights. Despite the less-than-ideal conditions, they could see something grand. “It was such a beautiful, noble building,” Matthew says.

That afternoon, the family became the owners of a castle, two houses, a nineteenth-century chapel, several barns and stables, a hunting lodge, an orangery, a watermill, a lake, and a forest. Soon after acquiring the estate, they decided to establish a guesthouse on the property.
Unstained oak, bright blue walls, and classic Thonet chairs bring a contemporary touch to the rustic bones of the shared living/breakfast room. The homeowners crafted the wainscoting using oak from their own forest.
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Clockwise from below left: The Chambre de Prunelle guest room was formerly the estate caretaker’s residence. One of many items already in the castle, a vintage photo on the mantel in the Chambre de Musy room keeps company with antique treasures, such as these timeworn books. Opposite: The main house living room features the original fireplace and mantel, lined with antique wine bottles found in the cellars.
The couple lived in the main house, built between 1810 and 1820, during renovations. Although many windows were missing and the buildings of the estate were overtaken by flora, the style remained untouched throughout. The roofs were in good condition, and many authentic architectural elements remained in place.

“Because the houses were built in the function of the castle,” Matthew says, “only the best building materials were used.”

Jitske and Matthew, who renovated everything themselves, built guest rooms in the Maison de Gardien—where the caretaker once lived on the first floor—creating four bedrooms (named after previous owners) with adjoining luxury bathrooms. They transformed the ground floor space into a light-filled, shared living room and breakfast area. Later, they recast the circa 1810 hunting lodge, once home to the gamekeeper, as a gîte, or a guest cottage, and completed all restorations using building materials original to the estate.

“We want our guests to experience life on this estate, the nature, the tranquility,” says Jitske. “Many people tell us coming here feels like coming home—and that’s a wonderful compliment.”
Guest room floor planks, this page, and a spiral staircase, opposite, below left, use wood harvested on-site. Pictured above right is the former hunting lodge.
Clockwise from left: Glass doors in the breakfast room open onto natural scenery surrounding the courtyard, where diners can linger with a glass of wine. An inviting outdoor playground, featuring a ceramic chess set made by Dutch artist Joka Boeke and a weathered wooden tower that once adorned the castle’s roof, offers a haven of relaxation. Jitske and Matthew take their horses for a stroll past the château’s ancient entrance gate.
Rhapsody in BLUE

A Dutch couple parlayed early retirement into an opportunity to live in the beautiful Auvergne-Rhône-Alpes region of France, where they turned a bereft farmhouse into a tranquil retreat.
Opposite: A Petrus Regout soup tureen sits atop a table in the garden. This page: In the living room of the guesthouse adjoining their home, a painted cabinet holds Clementine Roek’s collection of beautiful blue-and-white crockery; she inherited some pieces from her grandmother. The couple brought the table and chairs with them when they moved from Holland.
Eighteen years ago, when newly retired Albert Roek was offered a job as property manager for a friend’s small castle in central France, he and his wife, Clementine, were thrilled with the chance to live in the country they had long admired. While looking for suitable housing near the château, they stumbled upon a farmhouse that had been uninhabited for more than forty years.

The early nineteenth-century stone structure was in fairly good shape—despite damage from a leaky roof—and a cottage next door served as living quarters while the couple made necessary repairs. “There was no electricity and no plumbing system, so that kept us busy in the first months,” explains Clementine. “It was a bit like camping, but we didn’t mind at all. We both loved to be busy creating a new home for ourselves here in France.”

Once the smaller space, now a guesthouse, was habitable, they turned their attention to the primary

Left: A glass bauble for trapping insects hangs on the branch of an apple tree. Opposite: Behind the house, a wicker chair draped with lace netting alongside a vintage French iron table forms a spot for relaxation.
“WE REALLY FEEL AT HOME HERE, AND WE LOVE IT WHEN FRIENDS AND FAMILY VISIT.”
—Clementine Roek
building, eventually constructing a passageway to connect the two. It took longer than a year to fix all the holes in the roof; then they could undertake the renovation within. They insulated the walls and installed double-glazed windows. Five years after purchasing the property, the Roeks were able to move into the main section and begin decorating.

“Our interior decoration is not something we managed in a short period,” says Clementine, “but is the result of a lifetime of collecting nice brocante furniture and vintage items.” They brought some of their furnishings from Holland but found the majority at markets and estate sales in France. Walls are painted white throughout, and Clementine’s beloved blue hues are woven into every room, from her collection of crockery to bed linens and bathroom beams.

Now, nearly two decades later, the couple can look back with pride on their accomplishments. Says Clementine, “When we sit on our self-made roofed terrace—especially during summer—we consider ourselves very satisfied with our French home, most of which we restored with our own hands.”
“I AM PASSIONATE ABOUT GARDENING. IT IS ALWAYS A LOT OF WORK BUT WORTH THE EFFORT.”
—Clementine Roek

Opposite, clockwise from above:
Albert Roek built the simple shutters framing the windows and painted them a pretty shade of blue—his wife’s favorite color. An avid gardener, Clementine has added decorative touches here and there, such as a weathered iron chair placed before an ivy-covered rock wall and a rustic lantern tucked amid wisteria blossoms. This page, clockwise from left:
Purple wisteria trails across a garden shed that is also used as an atelier. Pleasant summer weather beckons outdoor dining, where Clementine sets the table with some of her favorite blue-and-white crockery.
A Sense of BELONGING

Countless hours into the search for a Gallic home—often visiting twenty listings during a single expedition to France—Inge and Kees Stapel traveled to Burgundy for the sole purpose of claiming the property they believe was destined to be theirs.
For years, an ambitious wish list kept Inge and Kees Stapel on the hunt for a French estate that could accommodate a bed-and-breakfast, as well as their private quarters. The Dutch natives dreamed of finding a château with scenic views and authentic character. Nearly a decade later and with just three photographs, the pair attained the idyllic location they had been seeking in Villa des Près, in the centuries-old village of Saint Révérien.

“Way too big,” Inge said initially when the Stapels’ realtor showed the couple a trio of images—all the information he had on the property. “But very beautiful,” Kees was quick to interject.

“This was the first time we had driven to France to see just one house. We entered the gate and instantly knew: this is it.” — Inge Stapel
Intrigued, they followed winding roads through the pastoral region of la Nièvre to reach the mansion. Crisscrossing rolling hills covered in a patchwork of meadows led the Stapels past babbling brooks, tufts of forest, and sunburned fields of grain. Around a bend, Villa des Près suddenly came into view, an elegant oasis overlooking a landscape untouched by modernity. Inge and Kees were smitten at first glance.

Charles Gabriel Joanin built the residence in 1840, and it remained in the Joanin family for more than one hundred years. It held many of the original effects, including Charles's bed and a table made to measure for the dining room. "We discovered heirlooms everywhere: glassware, lamps, headboards," Inge shares. "In the attic, where the maids used to sleep, we unearthed suitcases full of old letters and antique textiles. Little treasures, absolutely."

Once they decided to purchase the abode, an unexpected connection solidified their excitement over settling in the area. Inge's father phoned to say that he...
had been sifting through boxes of keepsakes when an envelope addressed to his late mother fell out. Inside was a note from her nephew thanking Inge’s grandmother for attention paid to his jubilee of serving as a priest for a quarter century in Saint Révérien. As it turns out, the previous tenants remembered him.

“Isn’t it incredible?” the innkeeper muses. “After years of looking for the perfect dwelling, we found Villa des Près. I’m sure it was meant to be.”

“Whenver we add something—wallpaper, a piece of furniture, or an accessory—it isn’t always from the nineteenth century but fits the style of the period.” —Inge Stapel
Below left: Tending the grounds is a joy for Inge. She serves an alfresco breakfast to guests—cherries and prunes gathered from a vegetable garden, eggs laid by her chickens, honey from Kees’s beehives, and locally baked bread with freshly prepared jam. Above left: In the airy kitchen, painted a sunny shade of yellow, a wood stove offers warmth during winter.
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WHERE TO SHOP & BUY

Below is a listing of companies featured in this issue. Items not listed are privately owned and are not for sale.

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Pages 65–74: Château de Digoine, 71490 St. Martin-de-Commune, France, +33 3 85 49 51 47, chateau-de-digoine.com.
Pages 85–94: Villa des Prés, Route de Corbigny 38, 58420 Saint-Révérien, France, +33 3 86 29 03 81, villa-des-pres@orange.fr, villa-des-pres.com.
“WHEN YOU LEAVE A BEAUTIFUL PLACE, YOU CARRY IT WITH YOU WHEREVER YOU GO.”

—Alexandra Stoddard