



light REFRESH

A LUMINOUS PALETTE PAVES THE WAY FOR A PHOENIX HOME
TO MIGRATE IN STYLE FROM ITALIAN TO FRENCH.

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THIS PHOTO and OPPOSITE: Serenaded by fountains arching into a pool, shaded by leafy palm trees, and scented by dozens of roses, the backyard of Melissa Mullard and her husband, Dave, is a treat for the senses. It's also family-friendly, hosting casual dinners, dance parties, and alfresco football watching.





Pure golden light—the kind that warms your face and your soul with its ethereal shimmering quality. That’s what Melissa Mullard thinks of when she remembers times spent in France. Specifically, she recalls the way light from the water of the French Riviera would bounce off neutral plaster walls and stone floors in her hotel room. “It created a mood that was wonderfully relaxed,” she says, “and yet undeniably elegant because of the rich simplicity of the room’s materials.”

Years later, Melissa and her husband, Dave, purchased a timeless manse in Phoenix. Melissa was drawn to the home’s split Texas limestone exterior, hand-forged ironwork, limestone fireplaces, coffered and barrel-vault ceilings, and plethora of windows and French doors that drench the interior in natural light while providing easy access to gracious outdoor entertaining areas. However, the home also featured dark walnut and cherry finishes on cabinets, beams, and doors that skewed more Italian than French—and an overall mood that was too formal for Melissa, Dave, and their three teenage children.

Undeterred, Melissa looked to the light, bright mood she’d fallen in love with on her travels—as



OPPOSITE: An antique French chair and a 19th-century table from the French village of Mas-d’Auvignon draw the eye down a hallway that connects the master suite with the home’s public rooms. TOP: Mediterranean design influences are evident in the home’s terra-cotta roof tiles and limestone veneer. ABOVE: Melissa outfitted her home so no space is off-limits to dogs Duke and Snickers. Color is introduced to rooms via accents, such as this beloved painting by Hunt Slonem.

Layers of off-white paint now bring a lighter outlook to the living room's formerly dark-stained window trim. Melissa built on the airy look by outfitting a pair of sofas with washable linen-look slipcovers. Melissa and Dave picked up the painting above the mantel on their honeymoon in Venice.





THIS PHOTO: To soften the breakfast room, Melissa incorporated feather-light draperies on one wall. She left another bank of windows undressed to maximize sunlight. A warm wood dining set holds the eye. OPPOSITE TOP: Decorative artist Marcy Cornoyer used a special technique to lightly paint over the kitchen beams' original dark stain before applying a lighter one. OPPOSITE BOTTOM: To introduce a touch of gray to the kitchen, Melissa worked with Tina Alexander Tile to select a custom color for the backsplash.





well as to the home's original design team of architect Mark Candelaria, builder John Schultz, and landscape designer Jeff Berghoff—to refresh the home and give it a French twist.

In most rooms, Melissa used her skills as an interior designer to update without demolition. “All of the woodwork was refinished and sanded smooth to receive a new light, bright painted finish,” Schultz says. “This had a real impact on the feel of the home.”

Perhaps no space better exemplifies the home's transformation than the kitchen. The detailing on the original dark cherry cabinets now pops thanks to a cream glazed finish, and light is reflected—rather than absorbed—by new Carrara marble perimeter counters and a backsplash of glazed ceramic tile in a French gray. Overhead, original ceiling beams, stripped of their walnut




RIGHT: The master bath was one of the few rooms in the house to undergo major structural changes. Melissa revised the layout to include larger windows and cabinetry that takes its style cues from French furniture. BELOW: A new bank of windows allows sweet sounds from a courtyard fountain to soothe while relaxing in the tub. OPPOSITE: Venetian plaster—in one shade for the ceiling and a darker hue for the walls—adds depth to the master bedroom.



finish, feature a patina resembling French oak. “By simply selecting a new colorization in these key materials, we were able to give the entire home a fresher, cleaner look,” Candelaria says.

In collaboration with interior designers Teresa Nelson and Kim Barnum, Melissa reinforced the home’s new style with a mix of French antique and reproduction pieces sporting distressed painted finishes, curvy

silhouettes, and classic gingham and plush velvet upholstery. Shifts in blue—from shades of sky in the living room to deep royal tones in the master bedroom—bring the look back to those Riviera views Melissa savors. “French style doesn’t mean stuffy or formal in our home,” she says. “Rather, it provides a way to live in a comfortable, flexible atmosphere that’s still sophisticated.” ❁



“I love *natural* light.
We welcomed it into the
house and chose colors
for walls and fabrics
that mirror it.”

—homeowner and interior designer MELISSA MULLARD