

# FRENCH & COUNTRY

Autumn Newsletter



[www.frenhandcountry.com.au](http://www.frenhandcountry.com.au)



*Bonjour!*

Dear French & Country friends and customers... when I started writing this it was to tell you a little news about my recent buying trip to Europe ... but some very exciting news now eclipses all my travel tales!

Michael and I have been yearning to find a place in the country from which to base our business, and soon after my return from France we found the perfect property in Bowral. "Hopewood Estate" sits elegantly in 11 acres of sweeping gardens and will provide us with the space we need to do justice to many of the larger furniture and architectural pieces we love to stock. A charming *summer house* will be the perfect place for smaller items for the garden and verandah and the house itself will offer accommodation and a gracious setting for all our European imports. Stay tuned to our website for more news about Hopewood, and as I will be heading back to Europe in June to top up my container, please call or email and let me know if there's anything you'd like me to source for you. In the meantime read on for news of the latest trends I gathered from my recent trip.

Happy Autumn!

*Suzie Anderson*



***Hopewood Estate:***

Hopewood was built in 1884 by Ben Marshall Osborne as his family home. His wife Lucy Osborne (nee Throsby) was a keen gardener and created the long driveway and circular carriageway where she installed a formal garden in the form of a large parterre. These formal garden beds have been retained and are still an integral feature to the entrance of the historic home.

Part of the charm of the gardens are the large trees, which predate the house. Old photographs show that much of the formal areas of the garden were laid out by the second owner Lebbeus Hordern who purchased the property in 1912.

It's not only a privilege to buy this very special property, it is wildly exciting and as a family we just can't wait to begin our Southern Highlands life!



# Parlons le français

A little chat with Suzie  
about her shopping trip to  
France and Belgium ...

Q: Where did your buying trip take you this summer?

A: I flew Malaysian Airlines (great satay!) to Paris and onto Marseille. I was collected by Gaetan, a friend and fellow antique dealer. Gaetan has the most exceptional sense of style and this is seen in his booth at Village des Antiquaires just out of Aix en Provence. I had been traveling for over 24 hours but there was no rest yet... we jumped straight into the little van Gaetan had hired for the few days to house the many purchases we would find along the way, and headed down through Cannes, to a beautiful home-ware shop in Valbonne. It is set up like a house, in an 18th century stone building. Owned and run by a gorgeous Italian couple, each room is impeccably decorated using a colour palette of muted greys/greens/stone, weathered timbers, subtle lighting, fragrant candles, aged linens all against the atmospheric centuries old backdrop. It was well worth the two hour drive. It was in this village, with muddled travel wits, that I selected a scrumptious looking nectarine from a fruit stand, only to find out it, like me, had just flown in all the way from Australia! I paid \$10 for it – a fact I didn't realize until it was too late! This gave Gaetan hours of amusement!



# Parlons le français (cont'd)



On previous trips I'd had the pleasure of staying at Villa Gallici in Aix en Provence and Hotel Villa St Louis in Lourmarin. Both were inspiring decoratively and historically, however this time the budget was focused on the antiques rather than on the accommodation, so I settled for a few days at the centrally located Hotel Cardinal in Aix. I had a comfortable,



spacious room, decorated with period pieces and it was a bargain at 68 euros a night. Another bonus was that the Sunday market was held at the end of the street, which made the early morning rise relatively painless!

After a few days of market rummages and scouring dealer's wares in Lourmarin, Avignon, Aix en Provence and Isle sur la Sorgue, I enjoyed my final night in Provence at Nathalie and Bertrands' (dealers from Lourmarin) bed and breakfast apartment in Apt ([www.la-madone.net](http://www.la-madone.net)).

Nathalie has created three themed apartments in the building adjoining her house. I stayed in the Baroque apartment and I found it hard to stop at just the one nights stay. Nathalie's decorating style is quintessentially provincial, using soft chalky colours, antique monogrammed linens, crystal chandeliers, antique beds, painted timbers and unique decorative pieces. Her shop in Lourmarin (La Boutique de l'antiquaires) is a great source for similar items. I look forward to a summer visit where breakfast could be taken in the conservatory after an early morning dip in the pool. I had a plane to catch, so it was a quick breakfast delivered to the apartment, an hours drive back to the airport and



then on to Paris.

My home away from home in Paris is the Hotel Crystal on rue St Benoit, Saint Germain. Its location is what wins me over, situated just a few doors down from Café de Flore and all the beautiful fabric houses, interiors and



antique shops and a myriad of cafes that are synonymous with the Saint Germain area. The rooms aren't huge but they are clean, welcoming and the staff are obliging and always interested in what discoveries I've made throughout the day ... and just what

they may need to store for me until my shipper comes to collect!

The next morning I caught the TGV to Antwerp where I stayed at the highly regarded showroom of decorator and floral designer Pieter Porter. The showroom is set in a Belgian mansion and in addition to the foyer, family, kitchen, dining and garden rooms, there is a grand tearoom, a boutique and three themed guest suites. Whilst it may seem overwhelming, it was the most intimate, serene accommodation I have ever had the pleasure of staying in. I spent a night in the English Suite, and given it was winter, I was happy to find my suite had two fires which would ignite at the flick of a switch. The music, the lights, the curtains were all remote controlled. I was in heaven with every sense catered for...music (he produces his own compilation cds), candles, décor, service, proximity to the antique strip and dozens of restaurants.

Pieter is reknowned for decorating hotels and grand homes, predominantly in Europe, but he also has a large client base in America. The ideas, inspiration and beauty found throughout his 'house' has left a lasting impression.

Reluctantly, I had to leave Antwerp after just a few days of discovering, but I know that it is a place that will be fixed on future itineraries. Brussels and Bruges are also next on the list. The Belgians speak English well as it





is compulsory from age 11 at school. The cuisine is creative and varied and they are very welcoming, helpful people.

The last few days of the January trip were spent at the Maison d'Objet Trade Fair and further antiquing at the markets in and around Paris.

Q: What were your most exciting finds this trip?

A: The most exciting finds on this trip were a mix of old and new. In Provence I came across the most beautiful collection of old paperback books in the palest of pale pinks. I could never tire of looking at them...simple, timeworn and feminine. A pair of old decorative European horses, in a very worn, original state, again, simple beauty. In Isle sur la Sorgue, I purchased a pair of arched, glazed doors of massive proportions, with the timber frames in a wonderful, grey green patina. I hope the original glass panes survive the trip back to Sydney.

ing an atmospheric light. I have purchased five or six of these and can't wait to exhibit her work to my customers when they arrive. She takes 3 to 4 months to complete the order as her work is quite intricate. It will be very hard to let them go!

Another favourite find was a restaurant I have walked past many times but never tried. It is *Le Relais de l'entrecote*, just a few doors down from my hotel in rue st Benoit. Their unique formula is that they have only one thing on the menu! They serve a small salad, followed by delicious sliced beef with a secret Parisian sauce and the best frites I've ever tried! They continue to top up your plate until you are done. Delicious. It is always packed to the rafters with local Parisians enjoying family dinners, romantic dates, girls nights out, executive dinners and then the random tourist thrown into the mix. The waitresses in their traditional black and white maids uniforms are kept busy topping up diners plates until you can barely fit in the crème brulee! A gem of a place.

Q: One thing you would most like to keep rather than sell?

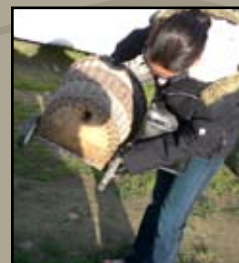
A: One of the abovementioned wire chateaux and a large hanging candelabra bought at Marche Paul Bert in Paris, oh and those pink books...actually I think I'll keep them!

At the trade fair I was excited to find some suppliers I hadn't encountered before. Interestingly, most of the goods I purchased were from Belgian designers. Simple in design, weathered wood and iron tables, zinc lamp bases, weathered timber plinth.

Another creative find was an artisan from Avignon, who weaves her magic with vintage fabric remnants, wire and zinc. She creates pieces of art that are characteristic of Provence. Doll's house size circus tents, miniature replicas of chateaux even with a courting couple within, illuminated by a simple zinc pendant light cast-

Q: What ideas do you see in Europe for enhancing the home?

A: As people are living such hectic lives, there was a definite trend to bring the outdoors inside, to encapsulate a sense of nature and calm. This is achieved by using aged, worn timbers, natural materials including linens, stone, muted colours, glass,



"For a Parisian feel, the décor could be more formal, refined..."



candles and music to create a total haven at home. Items normally reserved for the garden or glasshouse now grace the sideboard, kitchen or adorn the wall as a piece of art. There is a trend for few pieces, less clutter, but carefully chosen things of architectural or natural beauty e.g. stone or zinc spheres, busts, limed timber fragments, plants, leatherbound books piled high acting as pedestals

## Parlons le français (cont'd)

on which to place lamps, globes or other curiosities. There were also zinc obelisks converted to lamp bases, pieces of nature and things of beauty preserved under glass domes.

Q: Name the most exciting market/shops you saw and why?

A: I enjoy *Porte de Vanves* market in Paris early Sat/Sun mornings. It's a wonderful place to find unique decorative pieces and there's great camaraderie amongst the dealers. The Saturday flea market in Avignon, where you start the day with a strong espresso from the Tom Conti look-alike who runs the coffee cart. I don't know if it's his singing or the espresso that wakes me up!

I also enjoyed the antique shops in Antwerp, where I saw slight differences in stock, and a refreshing openness with the dealers.

Other favourites in homewares are: Flamant, Blanc D'ivoire, Mis en Demeure and the little Marais area Village St Paul. In Antwerp there was a unique store called Hot & Cold, New & Old, which specialized in everything for the bathroom, be it antique or the latest designs. Great concept!

Q: What are your tips for people wanting to introduce a French atmosphere to their home ...where do they start?

A: It depends if they want to encapsulate the Provincial feel, a Parisian style or that of coastal France.

For a provincial feel, incorporate lighter colours, taupes, off whites, ochre yellows, muted greens and greys, both in wall colours and furnishings. The furniture is mostly painted, French oak, fruitwood or pine. Simple pieces of furniture, linen curtains, accessories that are typically provincial such as anduze and confit pots, timber bread and cheese boards, enamel ware, old birdcages and decoy ducks, still life works of art on unframed canvas. Select natural linen or ticking fabrics in the upholstery or try slip covering the furniture. Iron or timber bedheads and iron curtain and stair rails, often in a rusted colour. For flooring, weathered or painted timber, tiled or flagstoned floors. Use table lamps with linen or wax shades and timber/iron candelabras to provide subtle lighting.

For a Parisian feel, the décor could





be more formal, refined. Think of incorporating pieces in the style of Louis XV and XVI, more curvaceous and detailed in the carving, perhaps painted or gilt timber, walnut or fruitwood tables and chairs. Chairs could also be upholstered in silks or fine linens. The use of plaster mouldings and decorative embellishments on walls and over doors along with high skirting boards, interesting cornices, crystal chandeliers, wall sconces, rich fabrics and wallpapers. Aubusson rugs, needlepoint cushions, velvets, brocade with trimmings finish the look.

Gilt mirrors that are embellished with carvings and accessories such as table candelabras, crystal glassware, fine decanters, silverware, leatherbound books, oil portraits, globes, busts, floral arrangements in cast iron urns, marble fireplaces and parquetry flooring work together to achieve that Parisian interior.

To achieve the coastal French interior, apply a more weathered style using paints in matt, chalky greys, whites, charcoal, reds and blues. Furniture tends to be simple, with wicker baskets and furniture, shells, blankets, ropes, driftwood, zinc, pale aged glass bottles often used as lampbases or casual pale timber lamp bases with simple cotton or linen shades. For fabrics, washed linens, tickings and white cotton slipcovered chairs and lounges to create a relaxed feel. Flooring tends to be timber covered with natural floor coverings such as sisal/seagrass matting or flagstones.

# Travel Tips!

Each time I travel away I like to search out interesting places to stay and dine. I'm often asked for recommendations on my favourite places so here are some from my most recent trip in February this year.

## CAFES + RESTAURANTS

### Paris

#### *Café de Flore*

172 Bvd Saint Germain 75006

#### *Barrio Latino*

46 rue du Faubourg St Antoine

#### *Barlotti*

Place du March Saint Honore

[www.buddha-bar.com](http://www.buddha-bar.com)

#### *Sud*

12 rue de Castellane, Paris 75008

Pub St Germain, Paris 75006

#### *Le Grand Colbert* (brasserie in movie

Something's Gotta Give )

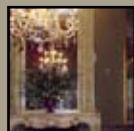
2 rue Vivienne, Paris

#### *Le Fumoir*

6 rue de l'amiral coligny 75001

Wonderful cocktails and the best hot chocolate in town. Sit outside and gaze at the Louvre and Paris' beautiful young things arrive graciously on their mopeds.

### Antwerp



#### *Sir Anthony Van Dijk Restaurant*

Vlaeykengang Oude Koornmarkt

16, 2000 Antwerp Ph: 03/231 61 70

#### *Chez Fred*

Kloosterstraat 83 2000 Antwerp

#### *Um Susbi e Noodle Bar*

Groenplaats 18, Antwerp



## ACCOMMODATION

### Provence

Hotel Cardinal, 24 rue Cardinale Aix

[www.hotel-cardinal-aix.com](http://www.hotel-cardinal-aix.com)

#### *Villa Gallici*

[www.villagallici.com](http://www.villagallici.com)

#### *La Madone*

[www.la-madone.net](http://www.la-madone.net)

### Paris

#### *Hotel D'Angleterre*

[www.hotel-dangleterre.com](http://www.hotel-dangleterre.com)

#### *Hotel Crystal*

[www.hotelcrystalsaintgermainparis.com](http://www.hotelcrystalsaintgermainparis.com)

#### *Hotel du Danube*

[www.hoteldanube.fr](http://www.hoteldanube.fr)

### Antwerp

#### *House of Porters*

[www.houseofporters.be](http://www.houseofporters.be)

## BOOKSHOPS

### *Taschen*

2 rue de Buci, Paris 75006

#### *The Red Wheelbarrow*

22 rue St Paul, Paris

## INTERIORS + HOMEWARES

### Provence

#### *La Boutique de l'antiquaires*

9 rue du Grand Pre, Lourmarin

#### *Village des Antiquaires*

6110 Route d'Avignon 135640

Puyricard

### Paris

#### *Flamant:*

8 Place Furstenberg, 75006

#### *Mis en Demeure*

27 rue du Church mid 75006

#### *Blanc d'Ivoire:*

104 rue du Bac, 75007

### *Village St Paul:*

[www.parislemarais.com](http://www.parislemarais.com)

### Antwerp

#### *House of Porters*

[www.houseofporters.be](http://www.houseofporters.be)



## MARKETS

### Paris

Porte de Clignancourt

Porte de Vanves

[www.frenchandcountry.com.au](http://www.frenchandcountry.com.au)

French and Country, 88 William Street, Paddington, NSW 2021  
T: 02 9361 0013 F: 02 9387 1521 E: [frenchco@bigpond.net.au](mailto:frenchco@bigpond.net.au)