



FRENCH LESSONS

A PROVENCE-STYLE FARMHOUSE IN
SHADY CANYON MARRIES AUTHENTIC HISTORICAL
DETAILS WITH MODERN-DAY REALITY

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To say that Fleetwood Joiner is highly focused on historical architectural details may be something of an understatement. Make that mildly obsessive. So when it came time to install the stone framing on the windows for this Provence-style farmhouse in Shady Canyon, the materials that arrived were just a little too perfect for Joiner's preferences.

The solution? The architect got out his hammer and beat away at the stone lintel until it had that just-so, imperfect-perfect patina.

"When you walk into this home, you don't know if it was built 200 years ago, or yesterday," says Joiner, founder of Fleetwood Joiner and Avalon Architectural, Inc.

It's a concept that reaches every inch of the 6,200-square-foot, five-bedroom home, from its third-floor tower (classic to Provence-style homes as an elevated perch from which to survey the land), to

In the guest bedroom of this Provencal farmhouse home, interior designer Natasha Minasian used Venetian stenciled texturing on the walls to give the room an authentic feel. In the parlor, a reclaimed stone fireplace keeps company with Von Hemert chairs. Accessories in the great room underscore the home's casual glamour.





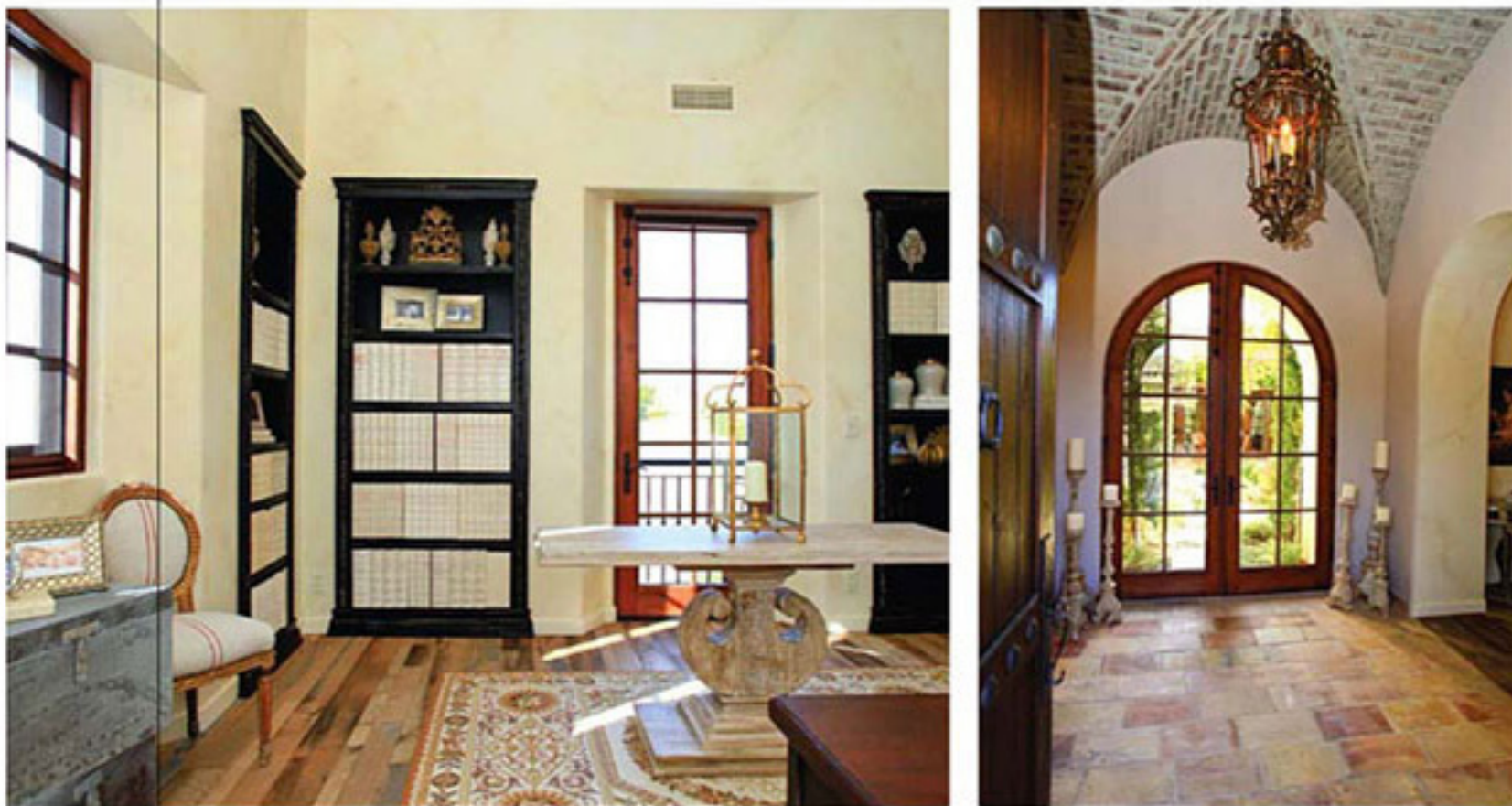
In the great room, high ceilings and reclaimed wood beams create a space that is high on authenticity and function. The flat screen television is cleverly hidden behind a tapestry above the hand-carved limestone fireplace. In the third story tower room, Minasian created faux parchment style books that conceal the residents' magazines and kids' art projects. The foyer pairs reclaimed French terra cotta flooring with antique brick used in the groin-vaulted ceiling. Teak tables and chairs are used in the loggia, while the hot and cold dip spa doubles as a water feature in the courtyard.



its basement garage, which holds up to six cars. "We put the garages underneath the home so that it doesn't even look like it has access for cars," says Joiner, who created a classic courtyard-style compound for the clients, a young couple that wanted a place where they could relax and entertain. "Like homes in Provence, this is more of a series of buildings and rooms with light and ventilation on both sides that wrap around a central courtyard," says Joiner. "And that courtyard becomes the central place of the home. This is a very private place, because you're basically surrounded by your own home."

But if Joiner is obsessed with architectural authenticity — many of the home's details were inspired by his trips to lesser-known villages in Provence, including Eze and St. Paul de Vence — he is just as obsessed with melding modern amenities into the design. Hence the hidden garage, and other details such as a hot and cold dip spa. "Typically, in the middle of a courtyard, there would be a well for the farm," says Joiner. "Here we placed the spas, that look as though they could be a large well."

When it came to furnishing the home, with its reclaimed lumber floors and beams, and antique terra cotta detailing, it was essential that the French farmhouse look extend to every last side table. Matt Jones, of Elbert Elsworth Design, was initially responsible for the interior design. Later, after the couple welcomed their first child, they enlisted



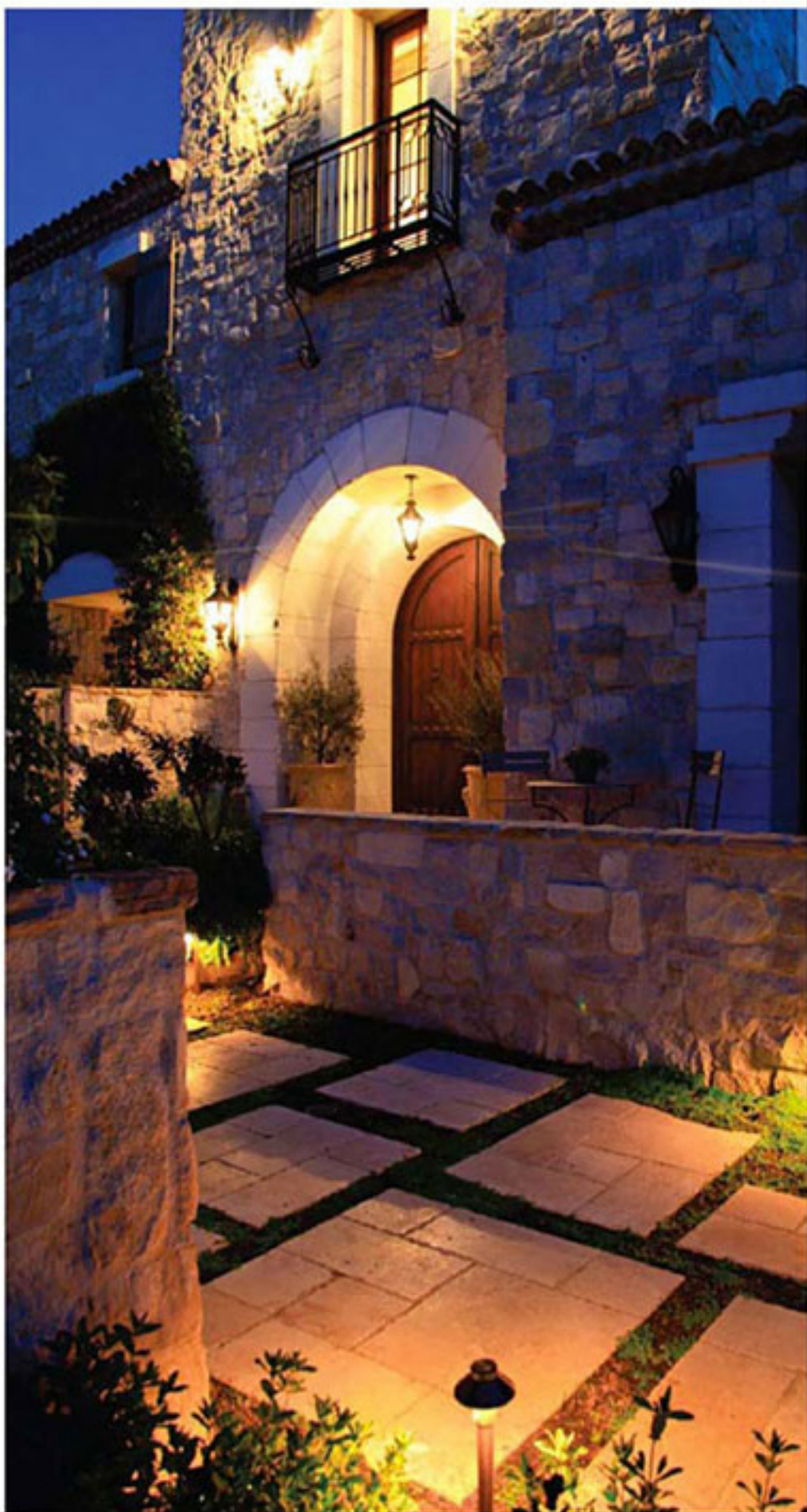
Natasha Minasian of Blossom Interiors to give the house a more casual, child-friendly vibe without sacrificing the farmhouse appeal. Minasian continued to accessorize and decorate the home with elements that added to the Provence-style architecture.

"This project was all about giving the home a shot of glamour while keeping that reclaimed feel," says Minasian. "Gray and white washed pieces looked really good and suited the feeling, so we went with some great antiques, but even when using new pieces, we used finishes so that they didn't look new."

And like Joiner, Minasian borrowed heavily from past forms while cleverly updating pieces with modern-day function. (Book) case in point: In the tower room, Minasian created false panels for the bookshelves. Designed to look like antique parchment books, they are actually molds behind which the owners can store magazines and kids' art projects.

The piece de resistance? Minasian created what may be one of the coolest television concealers: In the great room, the decorator hid the large flat panel TV with a tapestry that automatically rolls up and down, according to the residents' needs. "This way their sons can watch TV and have a snack, and when they're done, they can lower the tapestry, and the room can go back to its casual, authentic feel."

Elmo or Aix en Provence? It's as easy as a push of the button. ●



For the entryway to the home, architect Fleetwood Joiner used a mix of California stones that look and feel like a traditional French farmhouse.