

# HOME PLANNING IDEAS

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## An American Classic

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# French Refined

A professional decorator and her husband found ways to add classic touches to this new French country-style home.

BY THE TIME LESESNE AND BURY HUDSON DISCOVERED THIS HOME being built in an established Atlanta neighborhood, construction was three-quarters done. But there's a big difference between a home that's built and one that's completed, and Lesesne was just getting started.

"This is a very functional house, which was what was appealing about it," Lesesne says. "It had everything we needed on the first floor, but private bedrooms upstairs. I don't think there was anything about the house that we did not like as far as how it lives."

Designed by architect Jack Arnold, known for his French country designs, the home's little touches separate its convincing look from basic boxes that may have French accents but don't speak the language.

Shutters mounted on working hardware fit the dimensions and shape of the windows. The roof's gentle sweep at its base is echoed on the chimney cap, and stonework trims the door and windows on the ground level. Lesesne wanted the inside to look just as convincing.

"We wanted to do that throughout the house," she says. "That's why we did the cast-stone fireplaces. We wanted it to flow and have the same feel."

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MILLNER-THOMPSON HOMES AND NEIGHBORHOODS  
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Lesesne Hudson

## in detail

location:	Atlanta
square feet:	4,246
bedrooms:	3
bathrooms:	3½
footprint:	84' 9" x 91' 8"
est. cost:	\$150/sq. ft.
building time:	14 months



▲ **One of the first changes** Lesesne made inside was to replace the living room's wooden mantel with one of cast stone. French doors lead to the front courtyard. Instead of thinner moldings, she specified wide crown moldings using five strips of wood in different shapes. To make existing furnishings match the new decor, several pieces were re-covered and a brass coffee table was given pewter plating. Doors (not shown) were added to separate the living room from the entry and dining room.

◀ **The antique lion's-head** fountain helps keep the rear courtyard wall from looking stark as it adds seclusion to the master suite. Despite being close to a busy urban street, Lesesne says, noise is never a problem. "That whole part of the house is very insulated," she says. "The house was very well-built in terms of privacy."

**The arch theme** that begins outside is carried into the entry with an arched opening to the dining room. Lesesne replaced the original chandelier with a refurbished antique. The faux French door with curved head is actually a fixed unit with views to the front yard.



**Painting the cherry cabinets** khaki green with a brown glaze and adding feet at the base for a furniture look were among Lesesne's biggest changes. "They were dark, which was not me," she says of the original cabinets. The new finish "just made for a much warmer space that really dressed up the whole kitchen," Lesesne says.





▲▲ **Granite countertops** were used throughout the kitchen, including the island. Lesesne appreciates how the cooktop on the island faces into adjoining living spaces: "You're just right there within talking distance of anyone gathered around the fireplace in the family room."

▲ **An antique chandelier** above the kitchen island supplements a generous supply of recessed lighting. The finish complements the cabinet knobs and pulls that Lesesne selected from a company that specializes in traditional European hardware.





► **Arches added** to bookcases in the family room were among the many moldings that Lesesne introduced or enlarged to enhance the interior's French country feel. She estimates she increased the amount of cabinetry in the house by 50 percent.



◀ **Another cast-stone fireplace** replaced a less elaborate mantel originally used in the family room. The wooden beams had been painted a caramel shade, but Lesesne wanted a more natural look that was achieved using a faux finish.



upper level

Plans for this home, the Gascony (#4246), are available from Jack Arnold's Homes of Elegance, 800/824-3565 or [www.homesofelegance.com](http://www.homesofelegance.com).



main level



▲ **Nearly detached** from the rest of the house, the main-level master bedroom overlooks the rear courtyard, which provides so much privacy that Lesesne seldom has to close the window coverings. Unlike in the family room, the ceiling beams here are painted white to make the room feel open.

➤ **Lesesne upgraded faucets** in the master bath and took advantage of the 10-foot ceilings there. "The 6-foot mirrors above the vanities make it look even more soaring and majestic," she says. And as for the chandelier's unusual location, she adds, "I can't imagine putting anything else in that bathroom. It would have looked strange to have any other ceiling fixtures there." Travertine marble was used for the floors, counters, and shower.





**Sunlight** fills the library, which doubles as an anteroom for the master suite. Tall cherry bookcases help highlight the windows and doors, one of which leads to the front courtyard. "It's a great room because it's bright and sunny in the day and cozy at night," Lesesne says. HPI