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## Like so many American travelers besotted with the South of France,

Heather and Richard Grisham discovered their dream house in the land of lavender and wanted to transport it stateside. But Villa Gallici in Aix en Provence—a chateau converted into a luxury hotel—was not for sale. Even if it had been, realities like cost and logistics would have kept it in dreamland.

But as Oklahomans, the Grishams had two advantages most of their fellow Francophiles lacked—designer Charles Faudree and architect Jack Arnold, Tulsa big guns renowned for bringing a country-French look and order to Oklahoma's tall-grass prairie. Faudree, who has traveled throughout the States and as far as Spain to put his special brand on rural Gallic style for clients, was relieved to get the call from what is practically his own backyard: Bartlesville, where the Grishams wanted to build their home, is only a 45-minute drive from Tulsa.

He and Arnold, who also was the architect on one of Faudree's own homes (*Traditional Home*, May 1995), worked together from the ground up. "We told them about Villa Gallici, and they knew exactly what we were talking about," says Richard, an ophthalmologist whose passion for beautiful interiors extended to designing the pair of *bibliothèques* in the library.

Being able to observe the steep-roofed, yellow stucco home as it took shape gave Faudree a chance to catch mistakes before

**Top left:** Opposite the living room fireplace, a matching fireplace in the dining area unifies the open space.

**Top right:** Heather and Richard Grisham enjoy the country-French ambience behind their house.

**Above:** Hedge-high begonias border the pygmy barberries outlining the drive to the French-style house designed by architect Jack Arnold.

**Opposite and previous page, left:** Gift mirrors flank the living room's hand-carved fireplace, which has a pair of circa-1860 linen-covered French bergères pulled close for cozy comfort. Structural cables embellish the ceiling. **Previous page, right:** "I'm not Mary Poppins," he insists, but designer Charles Faudree answers the plea for style even in a storm.



Symmetrical balance is created around a reproduction French sideboard in the entry hall, which features beautiful herringbone oak floors that look centuries old.



they could happen. He noticed how sunlight played differently upon adjoining rooms, and that saved some grief with paint.

"We wanted the walls of the entry and the walls of the family room at the back of the house to be one seamless color, because the two spaces flow together," explains Faudree. "But when the sun began flooding through the windows in the family room, I noticed that the room began to fade, while the entry still looked the same. That's when I realized a single paint color wouldn't work for both spaces."

To get the organic but lambent look he wanted, Faudree used a yellow-tinged chamois color in the entry, and, in the family room, a darker peanut shade that lightens up in direct sunlight.

Another visual linking of the open spaces is showcased underfoot. "In terms of building materials, the floor is my favorite thing," Richard enthuses. Inspired by the mellow hardwood patterns that grace old châteaux, the floor consists of pre-grooved quartersawn oak glued to concrete in a herringbone pattern. The oak was hand-scraped to appear centuries old, then stained, sealed, and waxed to require minimal maintenance.

"It really is amazing," agrees an admiring Faudree. "It's so dramatic that it leads the eye from the entry to the rest of the house." Besides providing transition, the floor goes a long way towards authenticating the Provençal look. "Typically you can only take new construction so far," says Faudree. "These floors go the distance."

In the family room and library, the Grishams wanted to recycle the large red floral sofas that Richard, a widower before marrying Heather four years ago, had in his previous home. "Fortunately, red is Richard's favorite color, and it's also mine," laughs Faudree. But that's no secret to the designer's many admirers, who have long associated him with red, toile, and,



**Top:** Starting with a sofa from Richard's previous home, Faudree made the family room sizzle with his and Richard's favorite color, red.

**Above:** Faudree repeated the peanut color of the family room in a glaze on the unfitted cabinets in the connecting kitchen.

Striped silk pillows that match the window treatments soften white leather wing chairs in the master bedroom. **Opposite top:** Richard's preferred spot for a glass of wine in the evening is the library, which has another sofa from his previous home. The bull's-eye mirror opens up the room. **Opposite bottom:** The guest bath has a marble-topped custom vanity and walls in Faudree's beloved toile.





more precisely yet, red toile. "To give the family room energy, we pulled the red from the sofas and made it pop on the two big club chairs," says Faudree.

"Easy elegance" was the homeowners' goal, and according to Heather, it has been met. "When friends visit, they always comment on how welcome they feel. That is what Charles has done to the house," she boasts of her designer and friend. "He has made it warm and friendly and yet fun and unique. He just has a way of doing all that with harmony and consistency."

The same pale, earthy wall color that swathes the entry and family room continues in the great room—an open living and dining room that is just off one side of the entry (the library opens off the entry's opposite side). "The other rooms were strong in color and in pattern. While I wanted this space to flow from the others, I also wanted it to be softer," Faudree explains. The design's inspiration began with a silk plaid fabric.

"Design 101 says start from the ground up, with a rug, but rules don't always work," observes Faudree. "This fabric was exactly what the room needed, and I used it on the window treatments, the chair, and the ottoman."

And as anyone who has followed his work must know, Faudree never stops with just one fabric. "It's all about the mix," he says, fretful that with this restatement of his mantra yet one more



Before traveling to England with a friend, Heather asked Faudree what she should buy for the house. "I told her blue plates, and that was what she came back with," recounts the designer. The collection now decorates the guest bedroom, Heather's favorite space for early morning coffee. "The colors make me happy," she says.

Right: Blue-and-white toile on a pair of chairs and an ottoman adds cool color to counter the robust reds in the room's other patterns.





## Charles Faudree

A designer for 26 years, Charles Faudree changes homes as frequently as other people change hairstyles. All right, more frequently. Since one of those homes—a 200-year-old saltbox transplanted to Tulsa from New England—first appeared in *Traditional Home* in April 1990, six more of Charles's own homes have been featured in the magazine. (Let's see. That's seven homes in 14 years, plus his designs for clients. No wonder our readers are his biggest fans.) Among his own featured residences was his weekend getaway on the cover of *Holiday 2000*, above, and the one for which he was named a 1995 *Traditional Home* Design Award winner (May 1995). Incidentally, its architect was the same Jack Arnold who designed the Grisham home. Charles insists his country-French style with a plethora of English accents hasn't changed much, because it's "timeless." But, he admits, even a classic style is influenced by certain currents of culture. "For example, I use more Swedish and more painted pieces in my mix now, because of their popularity and availability. But I've always loved them—only now I love them more."

time, he may sound like a drone. "But it's still true," he sheepishly adds. So joining the plaid is a stripe in the same palette that covers the dining chairs—or most of them. To keep diners awake, a couple are upholstered in green leather—a calm, handsome treatment that stops the eye amid the whirl of pattern.

"Fabrics are one of the most important elements in creating the mood," Faudree asserts. So to heighten the atmosphere, he added two more to the great room—a floral and a geometric—that dress additional chairs in the conversation area. As a final ingredient, he added a lattice pattern in the form of a rug.

Despite the classic Faudree mix, the designer's most detail-oriented aficionados may notice something a little different is afoot in the Grisham home. "There's not as much stuff as I usually have in my designs. Not as many accessories or furniture. Their choice, not mine," he says wryly.

Still, the Grisham home is anything but spare. "I do have some clients who want to go sparse, but I find it hard to put just two objects on a table," Faudree deadpans. (For a client who wanted to be able to put her purse on every table, Faudree had just three words of advice: "Get bigger tables.")

By granting the Grishams' request for fewer layers while still suggesting glorious abundance, Faudree retained his sterling reputation as the master of the genre. "Usually when people work with designers they can't wait for the project to end," says Richard. "In fact, we had so much fun with Charles, we were sad when the house was finished." ■

**Interior Designer:** Charles Faudree **Architect:** Jack Arnold

For more information, see sources on page 230.

To order the book *Charles Faudree's French Country Signature*, please call 800/848-0115, or visit [www.thecatalog.com](http://www.thecatalog.com); specify TAE400473.