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A family-friendly home takes a dramatic turn thanks to crystal chandeliers and antique French furnishings trimmed with gold.

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The upper-level landing in Carol Lott's home is a microcosm of her decorating style: Casual family portraits, many taken by Carol, are partnered with glitzy Italian beaded sconces and an elegant 1930s hand-painted Italian chest.



Carol Lott has an affinity for cushy environs outfitted with old-world opulence, French antiques, and family-friendly amenities—all of which she and her family enjoyed while residing in a historical Greenwich Village apartment in New York. But when work took Carol, her husband, Roy, and their daughters to Los Angeles, their new home cried out for a character intervention. Enter architect Clive Bridgwater and interior designer Sue Balmforth, who transformed the 1930s house into a hospitable and *très chic* abode.

"I wanted a design that had elegance but that you could actually live in," Carol says. "With kids, we needed things to be comfortable."

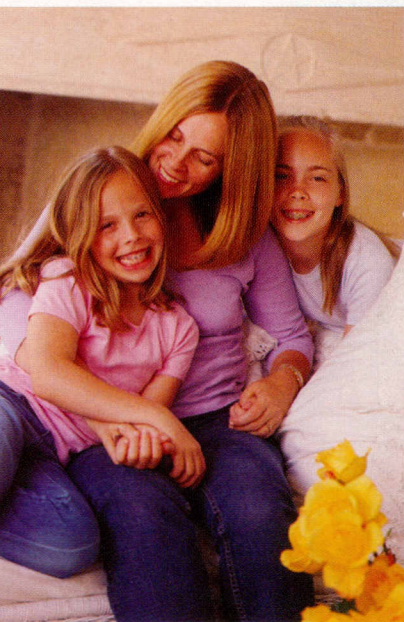
Knocking down walls and rearranging spaces made way for a family room and a more laid-back style of living,



THIS PHOTO: White slipcovers allow a gilded Italian cocktail table, French tole lamps, and a 19th-century gold-leaf French clock to take center stage in the family room. OPPOSITE: An early-20th-century Moroccan settee and an Italian chandelier in the foyer showcase Carol's love of one-of-a-kind items.



RIGHT: Designer Sue Balmforth's signature pieces—reproduction sofas with 19th-century French curves, Italian linen slipcovers, and a coffee table fashioned from a 19th-century French mahogany dining table—create a comfortable conversation area. BELOW: Carol and her daughters Ariana and Carina (left).



“The porch has become my very *peaceful* place, where all I hear is the birds in the yard.”
—homeowner Carol Lott

while the addition of substantial woodwork and salvaged French fireplace mantels conveyed age-old substance and set a refined stage for the French antiques the couple carried from Manhattan.

To enhance the home's sophisticated character, sparkling vintage chandeliers and crystal-studded sconces were suspended from walls and ceilings. “Our New York apartment had wonderful chandeliers,” Carol says. “One of my friends noted that the chandeliers were like jewelry, like glittery earrings. And now that’s how I think of them—as beautiful gems.”

Carol found the fixtures and her decorating muse at Balmforth's store, Bountiful, which features French and Italian antiques. “When I first went into Sue's shop, I fell in love with everything,” Carol says. “I really discovered my decorating style there.”

Balmforth helped augment the Lotts' existing antique collection with items that satisfied Carol's Francophile

preferences. “I've always gravitated to French things,” Carol says. “I look for pieces with great design, lines, and carvings. I love painted pieces—I'm drawn by the old paint colors and flower patterns.” Carol also loves the way French pieces work with other types of furniture—as in her family room, where they complement a slipcovered sofa and chairs.

Now from the Lotts' foyer to their back porch, finely formed furnishings from the past and present partner to produce collected-over-time appeal. In the foyer, a weathered urn makes a grand statement, while shabby-chic sofas add comfort to the elegantly appointed living room.

The dining room takes a more traditional turn thanks to stained wainscoting panels, a lavish chandelier, and a stone fireplace. Even the family room boasts a bit of glitz: Gilded finishes on tables and an oversize timepiece gracefully elevate the status of the kid-sturdy



The porch has proved to be a welcoming addition—the family eats meals at the early-1900s garden table, the girls roast marshmallows at the hearth, and, every spring, birds nest in the crystal chandelier.



THIS PHOTO: The carvings on a painted antique French bedstead and mirror-front armoire echo the ornamentation of the master bedroom's 19th-century French marble mantel. RIGHT: An early-20th-century hand-painted French chest takes the place of a traditional vanity in the master bath.



slipcovered seating. "I don't like things too guilty-gold; it can be too much," Carol says. "But the gilded pieces really work when you mix them with casual white slipcovered pieces."

On the porch, a crystal chandelier shines luxe light on cottage-style wicker and an intricately carved garden table—which Balmforth found and Carol heartily approved. In fact, such singular pieces with French ambience and period panache are just the type of decor Carol treasures.

"That French garden table is my favorite piece in the house," Carol says. "That is, along with the Moroccan settee in the foyer, the carved bed and armoire we brought from New York, and the old French fireplace surrounds—and, of course, all the chandeliers, which are really works of art." ❀