

FRENCH LEAVE

A rustic stone farmhouse perched in the hills above the Côte d'Azur provides low-key luxury for laid-back living

WORDS KATE JACOBS PHOTOGRAPHY LUKE WHITE





TERRACE

The outdoor kitchen and covered dining area have formed a space the family loves to use from spring to autumn, with a chunky dining table that works with the farmhouse look.

Uniq Plank table, Thors Design. For similar outdoor chairs, try Corido. Cushions in Antibes Batik in Denim, Ralph Lauren. Augustine outdoor pendant cones, Palecek

ENTRANCE HALL

A mirror facing the door brings the greenery of the garden into the house. Studio Indigo curated an edit of the owners' existing pieces to ensure a 'warm and welcoming first impression', says Mike.

Similar antique **console table**, 1stDibs. Similar vintage **chest**, Vinterior



This charming old farmhouse – think mellow, honey-toned stone and pale grey shutters – is just a short drive from both Nice and Cannes, two of the south of France’s most glamorous spots, but it could be half a world away. Here the pace is altogether slower, with the scent of lavender wafting gently into rooms dappled with Mediterranean sunlight.

The owners, who have four children ranging from teenagers to young adults, wanted a home that met the highest standards of 21st-century family living while preserving the authentic rustic character of the building – and called on the talents of Studio Indigo for the task. ‘This is an unpretentious French farmhouse and the owners were really keen to reflect that, with robust materials and durable pieces that would cope beautifully with the demands of a large family,’ says Mike Fisher, founder and creative director of the luxury interior design practice.

Mike’s first step was to make sense of the main open-plan room, which includes an island kitchen. Although the farmhouse had been reworked by an architect, this huge area, spanning much of the ground floor, came across as an echoey expanse of tiled flooring and beamed ceiling. By clearly zoning the space into separate functions – including sitting and dining areas – and using custom-made sofas and chairs that sit slightly low in the space, Studio Indigo has created a series of ‘rooms within a room,’ while boosting the sense of height. ‘The furniture was designed with lounging teenagers in mind. We wanted big, bold pieces to create comfort and to properly fill and define what felt like a vast empty space,’ Mike says.

As this is a house the family likes to visit throughout the seasons, it was important to be light and cosy

throughout. ‘For many of the rooms, the starting point was a striking collection of abaca and jute rugs, all with a raw, tactile feel bringing warmth to the cool stone floors,’ says Mike. For the colour palette, cues were taken from the south of France: warm, earthy oranges that are the perfect foil for vibrant Mediterranean blues against a backdrop of soft white. ‘We selected a mix of fabrics that would work beautifully when saturated in the Côte d’Azur sunlight.’

Equally careful attention was paid to the furniture, with bespoke, artisan-made pieces – such as the table and sideboard in the dining area – bringing unique character to each room. ‘Inspired by the location, the limed oak of the sideboard features a sculptural finish that reflects the patterns the waves make in the sand,’ says Mike. In the sitting room, the coffee table base is formed from a vast piece of a sculptural tree root, bringing a simple rustic element to the scheme while nodding to the tree-clad hillside setting. ‘Through the use of colourful textiles alongside organic materials we’ve celebrated the relaxed French farmhouse feel.’

The children’s rooms all have a seating area and bathroom, giving each family member their own space. The main suite – with its high ceilings, exposed timber beams and muted oak floorboards – goes one better, with his and hers bathrooms and dressing rooms, and a generous lounge area that serves as a private retreat. Here the bespoke seating is gently raised and wraps around the curving corner window, allowing the couple to drink in the magnificent views. With every space so carefully considered and curated, the farmhouse now has a feel of relaxed elegance that the whole family can come together and enjoy. 🏡

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“THE FAMILY WANTED A HOME THAT MET THE HIGHEST STANDARDS OF 21ST-CENTURY LIVING WHILE PRESERVING THE AUTHENTIC RUSTIC NATURE OF THE BUILDING”

KITCHEN

The island is teamed with a tall table and stools to create a breakfast bar that is a hub for the family.

For a similar kitchen, try Smallbone. Matthis counter stools, Scapa Home, are similar. Caravaggio pendant lights, Fritz Hansen





DINING AREA

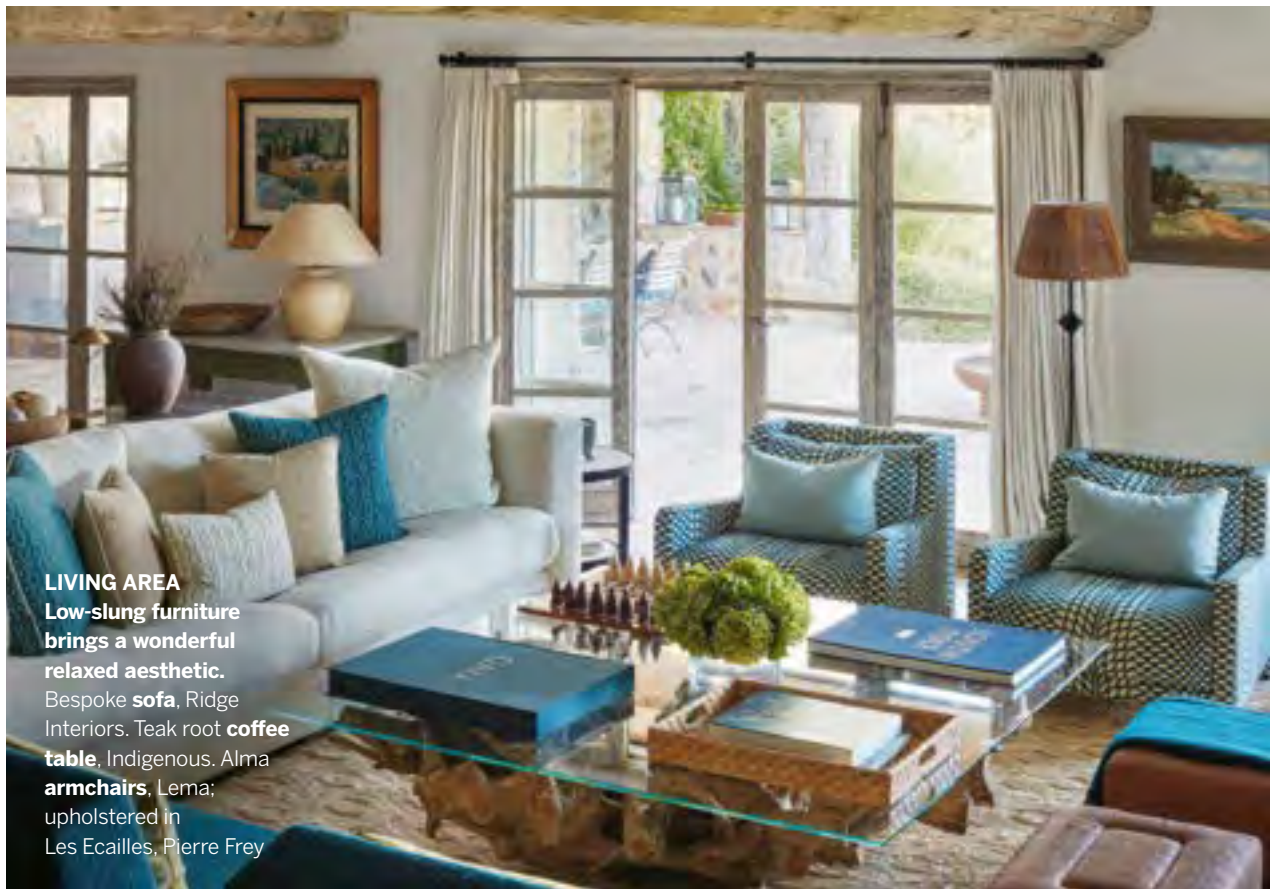
A circular table makes for a sociable atmosphere.

Bespoke **table**, Mathew Bray & Matthew Collins. **Chairs**,

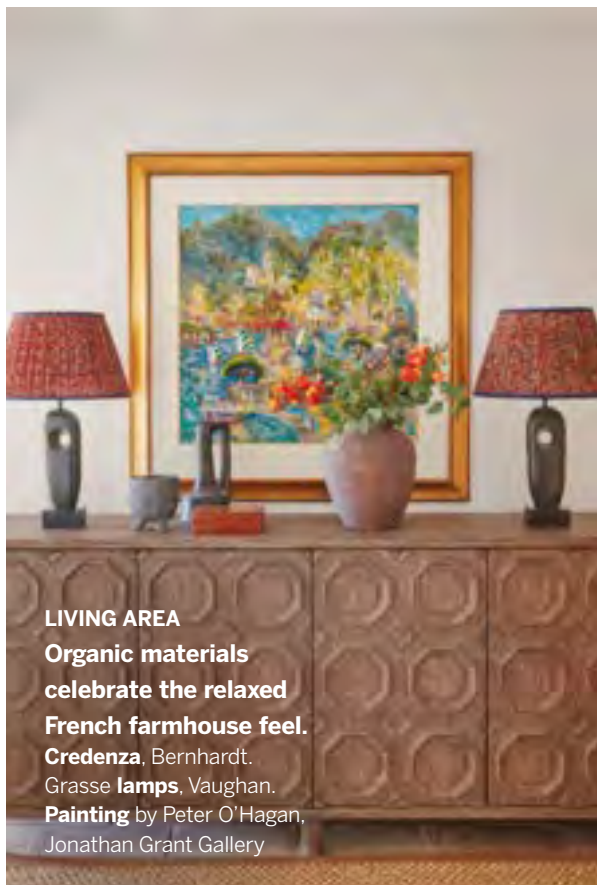
The Dining Chair Company; upholstered in leather and Quantock, Fermoie. Plaster Cone **light**, Rose Uniacke.

Conrad **lamps**, Porta Romana. **Painting** by Yves Brayer. **Rug**, Stark.

Bespoke **sideboard**, Treeslounge



LIVING AREA
Low-slung furniture
 brings a wonderful
 relaxed aesthetic.
 Bespoke **sofa**, Ridge
 Interiors. Teak root **coffee**
table, Indigenous. Alma
armchairs, Lema;
 upholstered in
 Les Ecailles, Pierre Frey



LIVING AREA
Organic materials
 celebrate the relaxed
 French farmhouse feel.
Credenza, Bernhardt.
 Grasse **lamps**, Vaughan.
Painting by Peter O'Hagan,
 Jonathan Grant Gallery

MEET THE DESIGNER

Mike Fisher shares his style inspiration

BIGGEST INDULGENCE Handcrafted bespoke design, because it is personal to the client.

SMALL CHANGE, BIG IMPACT Colour is really important to me. It gives a space personality and identity, bringing vibrancy and a sense of joy.

GO-TO COLOURS A bit of orange is always inspiring and really warms up shades of blue.

KEY DETAIL I like a surface, such as a sideboard, somewhere to put a lamp, some flowers and knicky-knacky things that make a space one's own.

YOUR STYLE IN THREE WORDS

Inventive, timeless, joyful.

DESIGN HEROES Charles Cameron, Edwin Lutyens, John Vanbrugh.

INSPIRATION More than anything, the building that I'm working on and responding to its particular challenges to create a unique solution.

FAVOURITE BUILDING Castle Howard – it's so theatrical against the Yorkshire landscape.

SECRET ADDRESS L'Atelier Blanc, a charming interiors shop in Vallbonne, France.



STUDY/SNUG

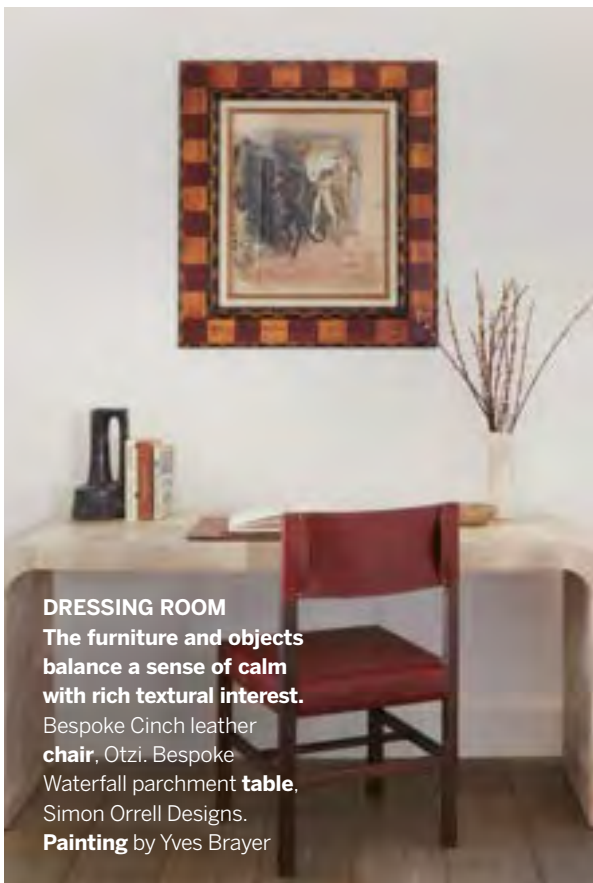
Just off the main living area, this room with neat pocket doors is ideal for working or watching a film, while the banquette provides useful storage. Seat cushion in a Pierre Frey fabric. Square cushions in Tapinu, Zak+Fox. Bespoke Cinch leather chair, Otzi. Rug, Tim Page Carpets



BEDROOM

This scheme began with the striking rug that brought a warmth to the terracotta tiled floor.

Crusoe **trunk**, Oka; upholstered in Daran, Zak+Fox. **Bedside drawers**, Soho Home. **Rug**, Stark. Keyhole **lamps**, Eccotrading Design London



DRESSING ROOM

The furniture and objects balance a sense of calm with rich textural interest.

Bespoke Cinch leather **chair**, Otzi. Bespoke Waterfall parchment **table**, Simon Orrell Designs. **Painting** by Yves Brayer



BEDROOM

The colours here draw on the vibrant tones of the Cote d'Azur.

Bespoke **sofa**, Ridge Interiors. **Blind in** Cabrieres, Pierre Frey. Parasol **table lamp**, Palefire at Glassette. **Rug**, Schumacher



MAIN BEDROOM

A judicious mix of fabrics and textures was layered to create a comfortable, inviting scheme, with pops of burnt orange and sea blue that reflect the south of France location. **Headboard in** Les Ecailles, Pierre Frey. **Cushion in** Scrolling Fern Frond, Soane Britain. Bespoke **bedside drawers**, Vidal & Company. **Frank table lamp**, Paolo Moschino