

Achieving Simple French Country Style At Home

(NAPSA)—For many Americans, French lifestyle conjures images of high fashion, upscale dining and expensive wines. However, more and more Americans are moving beyond these urban stereotypes and turning to the French countryside for inspiration in casual dining, simple home decor and relaxed everyday living. No matter what the activity, you can weave the French *joie de vivre* into your life by following a few simple tips from Robert Arbor, author of “*Joie de Vivre: Simple French Style for Everyday Living*,” and enjoying Red Bicycleette, a new wine from the south of France, available at your local wine and grocery store.

The Great Outdoors

French country living means drawing enjoyment from life’s everyday activities such as shopping or preparing a delicious meal. A trip to the farmer’s market can transform an ordinary shopping trip into a sensory adventure, allowing you to enjoy the outdoors, touch, smell and sample market offerings, while interacting with local artisans—farmers, butchers, bread bakers, and cheese makers. In addition to reaping the rewards of a fresh, seasonally driven meal, you’ll relish the shopping experience while supporting your local community.

Table Do’s

Presentation is an integral part of dining in the French countryside. When preparing for a dinner party, place large flower arrangements on the side tables, using smaller vases of flowers on the dining table. The small arrangements should be low enough to converse over and should reflect both the season and the mood you are trying to create. Small votives situated near each setting create an even distribution of warm light. A beautiful table is simply adorned and properly lit is



an inviting setting for your guests.

Choosing a Wine

Wine plays an essential role in French country dining and entertaining, and southern France lays claim to some of the country’s finest wines. The new and delicious 2003 Red Bicycleette Syrah, Chardonnay and Merlot offer a fun and approachable alternative to stuffy French wines—no more confusing labels, intimidating language or lack of grape identification. The rich red fruit characteristic of Red Bicycleette Syrah and Merlot complement heartier dishes including lamb, roast duck or pasta, while the crisp Red Bicycleette Chardonnay pairs deliciously with seafood or roast chicken.

Nap Time

Rest and relaxation are an obsession in French culture, and nap time is an opportunity to enjoy a quick read, snooze under a tree, or sit back and absorb the day’s activity. In the hustle and bustle of our lives, taking this personal time to relax is crucial. The next time you have a few extra moments, take the time to walk outside, read a chapter of your book, or simply take a deep breath as those who live in the French countryside do!

As Arbor says, “All the things you do to make your life fun and fulfilling involve completing little tasks that actually become rewarding parts of daily life. It’s these little things that add up to the big, wonderful reality of *joie de vivre*.”