



# Tour de France

STORY BY  
AMY CARTER

PHOTOGRAPHY BY  
TIM BROWN

One who does not know the history of Georgia's Golden Isles would not know just by looking that Frenchmen ever touched toes to this shore. Spanish and English influences on the realm are indelible, marking everything from architecture to street names. France left no such legacy. At least not overtly.

The one notable exception is a house newly constructed in the St. Simons Island Club. French to the very roots of the demilune parterre that delineates the curve of the front drive, this house is a Francophile's dream, quite literally. Interior designer Margaret Garner blends authentic French architectural details with custom touches that blur the line between old and new with gorgeous results.

The effort succeeded well enough to land this house a spot on the 56th Annual Christ Episcopal Church Tour of Homes and Gardens on St. Simons and Sea islands. It is Stop #1 on the March 21 tour, located at 125 Biltmore in the St. Simons Island Club. With 3,800



square feet and four bedrooms and baths, this house is neither pretentious nor overwhelming in its scale, despite the centuries of history that lend such a warm patina to its most notable features. Here, authentic French doors, Catholic shrines and plaster friezes, chandeliers and other architectural pieces – many taken from a dismantled Provençal

chateau – attest to the designer's élan with reclaimed European artifacts.

The tour starts at the front door, or more accurately, the pair of Provençal Villa doors that open into the Grand Salon, an open formal living/dining room combination customary in older European homes. There are two ways to access the interior of the house from the salon. One may choose the butler's pantry, which includes a China and crystal cabinet enclosed with sliding doors remade from chateau shutters. Although the original hardware had to be removed to allow the doors to slide, the distressed blue paint is authentic and unretouched.

Passage is also allowed through the foyer, which affords access to the house from the garage, and to the stairs leading to the second story. The guest bathroom off the foyer is notable for its curtained French door, and its authentic marble slab sink. Garner had an antique chest in mind to hold the sink, which ultimately proved too heavy