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It's True: Every Cool French Girl's Room Has These 3 Things



by SACHA STREBE

From the [lesser-known attractions](#) where they spend their summers to [what they eat](#) for effortlessly luminous skin, cool French girls and their effortless charm are inspirations for us all. Even their homes exude that offbeat insouciance—just take a peek at this [Parisian apartment](#) and you'll see what we mean. But what is it that makes their interiors so different from ours? "I think French people are more instinctive when it comes to interior design," acclaimed Parisian designer [Sarah Lavoine](#) told MyDomaine. "They would naturally mix times and styles when American people would faintly go for one style."

So we tapped Lavoine's expertise to find out how we can infuse this hip, visceral style in our own spaces. The first step? Incorporate her design philosophy: "*Être heureux est un art de vivre!*" which loosely translates to "being happy is an art of living." This is the foundation for all of her work. "I do everything I can to create an interior synonymous with happiness," she said. "Cozy, chic, warm and with a lot of colors." **Ahead we share Lavoine's tips for creating that cool French-girl look at home, including the three things every room should have and her number one small-space hack.**

INJECT COLOR, INTIMACY, AND WARMTH

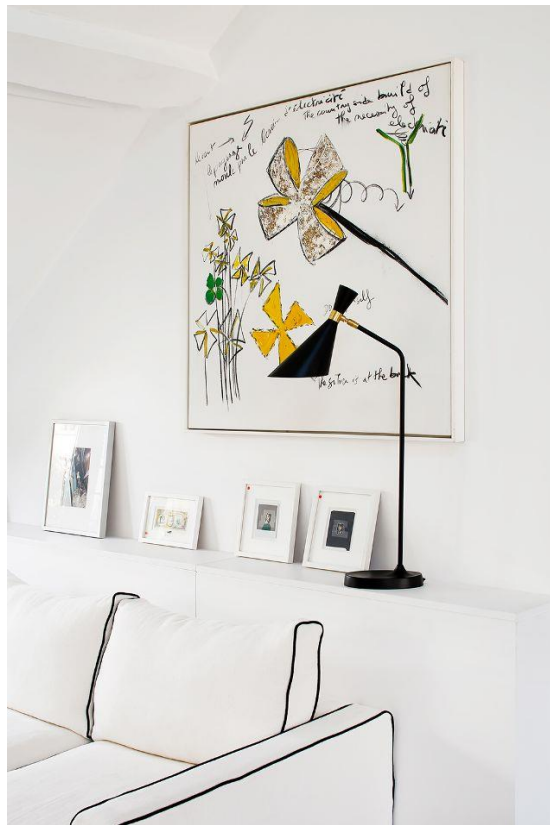
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PHOTO: Courtesy of Sarah Lavoine

The first thing Lavoine thinks about when decorating a room is the visitor. "It's very important for me to do everything I can for the visitor," she said. "And imagine the solution so that the visitor (whether it's a hotel room or residential project) can feel a warm atmosphere. The room should be intimate and very peaceful." In order to evoke that sentiment, Lavoine says there are three qualities every room should have: color, warmth, and intimacy.

BREAK THE RULES



When it comes to achieving the French look, we all want to know what the rules are. But the truth of the matter is there are none. Lavoine loves to break all the rules; otherwise, "It's not authentic to me," she explained. "And it's not warm. I like to mix material, colors, patterns, modern and vintage furniture." So in short, anything goes. Just follow your heart and let that guide you. Of course, this is easier said than done, so we recommend taking a look through [Lavoine's portfolio](#) as a guide and researching all the [French interiors](#) to formulate a blueprint for the Parisian aesthetic you're after.

CONSIDER THE SPACE

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PHOTO: Courtesy of Sarah Lavoine

If there's one part of a room that often gets overlooked, it's the space itself. Before you even start planning, be sure to look around the room and get a feel for it. "Space is so important because it defines the way that you will organize the room," expressed Lavoine. "If there is a big room, it's nice to design a huge bed with some generous dimensions. Some people can feel oppressed in a small room and lost in a big room. So in order to make a room feel good, start with some specific materials *and* a few tricks. For example, I love mirrors. They're a nice way to enlarge a room. I often try to hang many on one wall, a big one and a few smaller."

INFUSE DEEP COLOR INTO SMALL SPACES



While **small spaces** can be challenging, for Lavoine they're a way of life. "In Paris, we are used to small spaces," she says. "They're our common scale and it's related to the specific architecture of the city." So, of course, the French designer has become a pro at customizing studios and making size-challenged rooms feel roomy, elevated, and unique without compromising style. How does she do it: "To personalize a small space, I usually add some drama and I try to use deep colors," she says. **"You would think they shrink a space, but they don't; they only underline the great features of a room."**

MIX MATERIALS AND COLOR WITH ABANDON



While many of us know about the importance of texture in a room, Parisians ramp it up to the next level, mixing and matching colors and materials where possible to create a truly personal space. "Every part of the room is a perfect playground to find solutions to add texture," affirms Lavoine. "For the walls, I use paint or wallpaper (to add texture). These two tools can totally change the look and feel of a room. The best way to add texture to a room is to mix the right materials in the right colors. I love the idea of giving every room in the house a unique identity with a specific color."

In fact, color is very important to Lavoine, and she isn't afraid to use it. Even the floor color in her projects is carefully considered. Her favorite hue? Bleu Sarah. "It's the color I created," she exclaimed. "The material used to apply a paint can also alternate the color, and it's just a magical thing. This is totally true with Bleu Sarah because it's a deep color, which can change according to the material. It's fantastic to see that in my projects and in my collection."

FUSE FASHION WITH FURNITURE



The French certainly have a knack for style, and everything from clothing to interiors and fashion definitely influences Lavoine's design choices, especially her color choices. "The different kind of materials and textile used in fashion are always a beautiful source of inspiration," she said. "You can actually find some furniture in sponge textile, for example (not actually in my collection or in my projects), but it's a great way to show how fashion can influence interior design style."

TRUST YOUR INSTINCTS

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If you adore the French design style too but don't feel confident pulling it off yet, Lavoine says it's time to let go and just follow your instincts. "Trust your gut," she urges. "I think people should try to be spontaneous and stop hesitating to confront styles and different periods of time otherwise you feel like you're living in a showroom." Hear, hear.

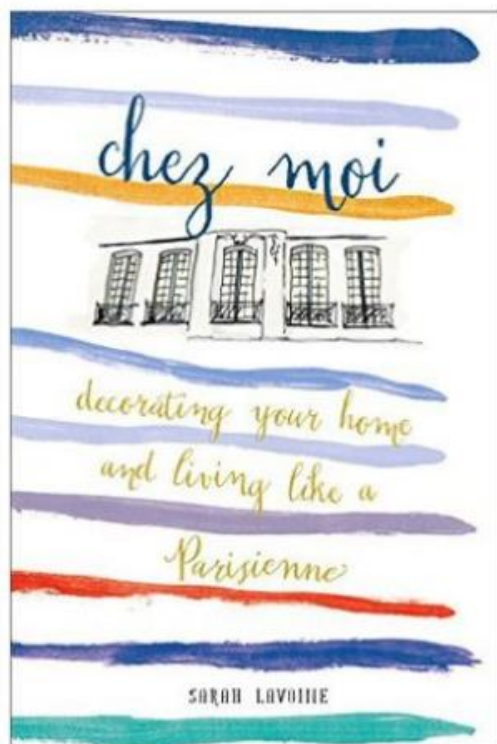
WHEN IN DOUBT, ADD THESE 3 THINGS



If you haven't noticed already, we're big fans of French design, and while we're definitely going to try to apply all of Lavoine's tips to our own homes, not everyone has the time or space to. So we asked Lavoine to share her top three things every French room should have (that we can do too). "A nice scented candle for the light and the fragrance, a mirror on a wall to bring light and perspective to the room, and a comfortable place to sit with your family," she said. *Parfait.*



Discover more of Lavoine's tips and how to perfect that cool French-girl style at home with her book below:



SHOP

Sarah Lavoine [Chez Moi](#) (\$13)

What is the interior design style you adore from around the world?

EXPLORE:

Sarah Lavoine, French Home