



My home in France

Perfect blue-sky weather, cobblestone streets, exquisite produce... there's a lot of joie de vivre in Peta Mathias' adopted hometown Uzès. She takes us inside her one-of-a-kind home.

PHOTOGRAPHY by SALLY TAGG

Peta's dining room, with colourful chairs and majolica plates found in flea markets. OPPOSITE: A hand-painted mural, by artist Sarah Wood, was inspired by a dress of Peta's which features a traditional Rajasthan design.



FROM TOP: The gold panel behind the living room couch was painted by a Swiss artist who creates similar features in Arab palaces. Peta thinks the spiral staircase would be illegal in New Zealand; Peta snaps up fresh produce on market days; the kitchen, used for cooking classes, has a Smeg fridge and Provençal floor tiles.



What's cooking?

The ground floor of Peta's three-level home is where she hosts her cooking classes (and the long lunches that follow the lesson). "It's lovely for a cooking class because people get to go into someone's house – it's domestic, rather than just being in a cooking school."

Endless sunny days

There's no shortage of reasons to live in the South of France, but the weather does have a big part to play, with perfect blue skies much of the time. Large windows ensure that Peta's home is as sunny inside as it is outside, and the top level, where the bedroom is, has an outside area for relaxing in the shade. On the day we visited, the temperature was well into the mid-40s. Peta has added her own quirky, colourful touches. Inspired by Polynesian friends, she embellished the entrance with a cascade of artificial flowers. The stairs leading from the ground to the first floor are painted in a piano key pattern, then dotted with more faux flowers. It's not just the house that's been given DIY touches – Peta is pictured below in Charles & Keith shoes she repainted turquoise, adding colourful Provençal-style bows. →

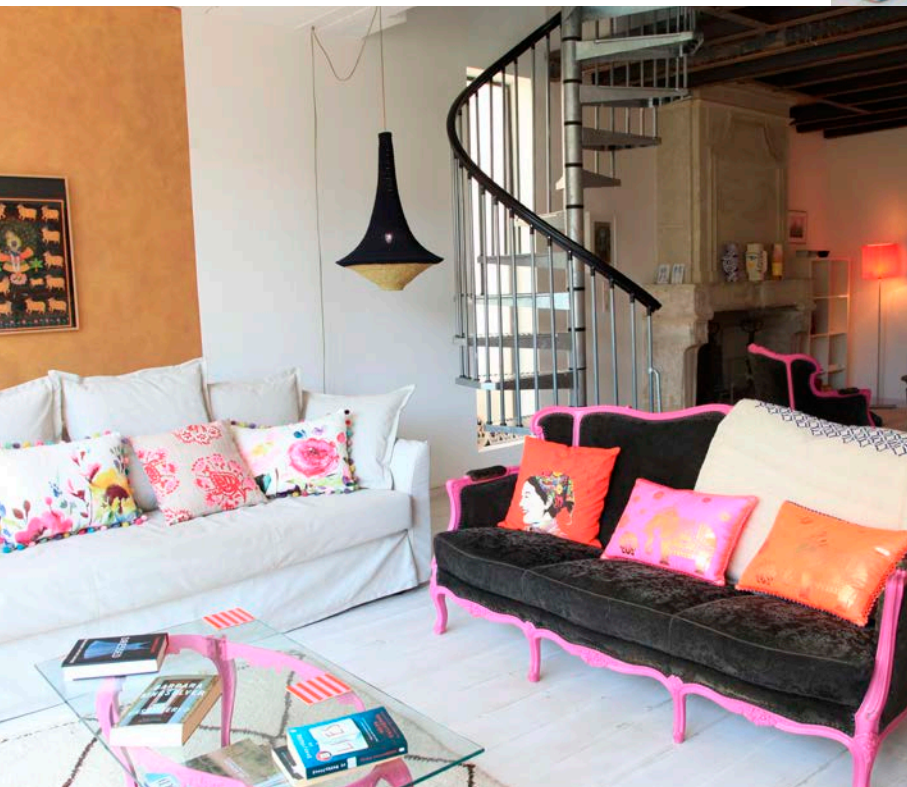


FROM TOP: Faux flowers create a welcoming garland; Peta wears a dress by designer Sara Roka, who lives in Italy; mismatched china, picked up from local flea markets.

Home



ABOVE: Peta heads into the passage that leads to her house. She and her neighbours often have “passage parties”, when they all drag their furniture out and everybody brings a plate.



Home of many colours

A palette of mostly white walls and floors means that the many pops of colours don't make the small but perfectly formed house feel cluttered. Valerie Barkowski linen sheets are topped by a pompom blanket from Morocco (above) in Peta's bedroom, which takes up the second floor. The living room (left) features a couch that looks nothing like its original incarnation. It was given to Peta by Gina Codoni, who designed the house. Gina had spray-painted the couch black but Peta asked her to paint the wood fuchsia. Behind the couch is a 16th century fireplace, which Gina restored so it could be used once again. **AWW**