

AUTHENTICITY & ELEGANCE

Ulster Tatler Interiors chats to Louise Scott Heatley, owner of home interiors boutique, French Vintage Vie.



Have you always had a passion for home interiors?

When I was studying A-Level Art & Design, I wanted to pursue an interior design course. But I was also studying A-Level French and my passion for France and learning the language won and I chose a degree in French. So I guess things have come full circle by creating my own French interiors and furniture sourcing business, French Vintage Vie!

What is it about French interiors that inspires you most?

The French are renowned for being stylish and having a certain "savoir faire". They take pride in their architecture and design and have a culture of preserving the past with generations living in the same family home and passing down their fine quality furniture. So for me, it is the authenticity and elegance of their interiors – whether that's a

luxurious dining room with over-sized table, side-board, gilt mirrors and chandeliers in a picturesque chateau or a rural rustic kitchen with wooden beams, gleaming with copper and enamel pots and jugs.

What does a typical days work involve for you, if there is such a thing as a typical day?

I have juggled my business for a while alongside a full-time marketing job, so my days were always pretty hectic! But in the last couple of months I have taken the plunge into self-employment to focus on French Vintage Vie and some freelance marketing. I split my time between my interiors showroom in Belfast, meeting clients and working from home. Not to mention, frequent visits to France scouring antique fairs and meeting dealers.

How do you relax and unwind on your days off?

I love a day off when it's bright and sunny and I can get outdoors. Beach walks with my dog and dining out with friends and family are my favourite pastimes. I'm very excited about spending more time in France this year at my new house where I'll definitely spend a few days off decorating and getting to know the locals!

What are your typical clients looking for?

My clients are usually Francophiles or passionate about French interiors like me so they often know exactly what they are looking for but just can't find it here in Ireland. They are searching for something old and real rather than reproduction. They appreciate the story behind each unique hand-sourced piece of furniture and they value the personal service that I can offer them.

What are the best and/or most challenging aspects of your role?

The best bit of my job is obviously the antique shopping in France - I absolutely love rummaging through rows and rows of furniture and finding amazing treasures to bring back. The most challenging aspect of my job is also the antique shopping in France! Sourcing specific items of



furniture for several clients in a huge antique fair that only lasts four hours can be stressful!

What are the main trends going to be for spring?

Mixing antique and vintage pieces alongside contemporary furniture in a modern setting is very popular at present. An eye-catching dominant antique piece of furniture can become a decorative focal point in a room. French Vintage Vie has two sourcing trips to France planned this spring – early March and end of May. We'll be sourcing for private and commercial clients.

For further information, visit www.frenchvintagevie.com

