

PROVENÇAL WISDOM

A COUPLE ADDS ANTIQUITY TO THE GARDEN

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Europeans are famously skilled at the art of pairing. And when Susan Hofherr first arrived in Palm Beach, she could think of nothing better to complement the area's Mizner-style manses than garden antiques from her Mediterranean upbringing. "There was nobody providing homeowners with quality garden antiques that could hold up to the beauty of their residences," Hofherr recalls. In order to fill that void, Hofherr and her husband Wolfgang, an art historian and restorer fresh off a stint renovating palazzi in Italy, opened Authentic Provence nearly 10 years ago.

Headquartered in a 7,000-square-foot showroom in downtown West Palm Beach, Authentic Provence maintains an extensive and exclusive selection of European garden antiques, from French Trumeaux fireplaces and Tuscan urns to the country's largest inventory of Caisse de Versailles and Vase d'Anduze. "Some people just sell pots or statuary, but I don't think anyone has the assortment that we have," Hofherr says. And should the array of choices prove overwhelming, the Hofherrs have extended Authentic Provence to include a second showroom called The Secret Garden, where various vignettes showcase their largest pieces in an outdoor setting. "It gives people a more visual idea of what can be done. They can see that in Italy, this kind of topiary is used with this kind of fountain and carved limestone, for example," Hofherr explains.

Providing a context for the centuries-old pieces is at the heart of the couple's business. Hofherr says the architectural and historical knowledge of her husband, who worked for years at the esteemed Parisian auction house Drouot, is one of the reasons clients fly in from across the country for personal design consultations. "When people go to Italy or France for a week, what they come back with is a snapshot of the style—and it will remain a snapshot unless you have someone who can help you recreate that look with authenticity," Hofherr says. "We show clients that a replica from China doesn't have the same feeling. We are proud that we help people avoid the traps of pop production." *authenticprovence.com; 561.805.9995*



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