

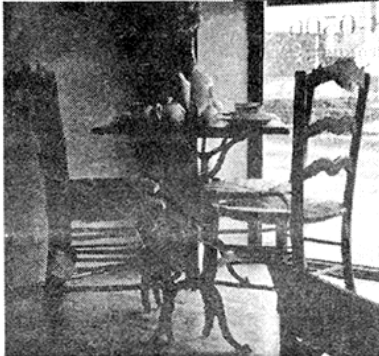
# The Baltimore Chronicle

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Summer 2003

**FRANCE COMES TO HAMPDEN:** Marie-Noelle Walsh has opened Bastille French Country Antiques, complete with fresh orchids in antique vases, at 3620 Falls Road. How did this native Frenchwoman and resident of York, Pa. come to choose Hampden for the site of her regional business? See page 16.

photos by Alice Cherbonnier



*Vive la France—  
in Hampden!*

**'ANTIQUES FOR EVERYDAY LIFE':**

## A Little Bit of France on Falls Road

by Alice Cherbonnier

When Marie-Noelle Walsh decided to open a business in Baltimore specializing in French country antique, she and her real estate agent checked out all the hot spots—Federal Hill, Canton, Fells Point. But it was when exploring on her own that Ms. Walsh discovered the 1700-square foot space her business, Bastille French Country Antiques, now occupies.

"I looked at 50 other sites," she said. "Nothing appealed." Once she decided on the Hampden location, she said she found Main Street Hampden and other merchants to be very helpful.

The space glows in its new coat of light orange and bitter-sweet sponge paint, applied by Ms. Walsh herself when the painter didn't show up when expected. The shop windows were redesigned to allow for changing displays of furniture and accessories.

An interior designer trained at the Pratt Institute, Ms. Walsh plans to use her shop as a base for her design consultation business. Since she's in and out of the shop on appointments, for now shoppers need to call ahead on most weekdays to arrange for her to be there. The shop is open to the public, for now, from noon to 7 p.m. on Fridays, and from 11 a.m. to 5 p.m. on Saturdays.

She may also be absent for another reason: she plans regular travel to France to buy new merchandise that has been scouted by two associates. The trio seek items in the French countryside, where the quality and price are better for resale. They look for solid wood pieces, along with interesting accessories, including china, candlesticks and vases.

"I want to have things that are affordable, that people can enjoy in everyday life," she says, pointing out an old prie-dieu (for kneeling in prayer) priced at \$90 that today can take on a new life as a clothes-horse in a bedroom. There are also large armoires priced in the low four figures, plus a wide array of tables and chairs and other furnishings.

The shop is laid out and decorated as if it is a private home, and furniture surfaces are used to display fresh flowers—including orchids—to give the feeling of a residence. Indeed, Ms. Walsh says there have already been luncheons held there by cultural groups, and more are planned.

Though the location of Bastille is new, the business is well-established. Ms. Walsh first opened up shop in San Francisco over 15 years ago. Once she became a single mother of two, Ms. Walsh moved to the York, Pa. area to be near her parents and take time off to raise her children. Now that they are teenagers, she has resumed her work.

For more information, call 410-338-0506 or visit the shop's website at <http://bastilleantiques.com>.

• Almonds are a member of the peach family.