

CHATEAU
DOMINGUE

Impossible n'est pas française.

RUTH GAY:

ACCOMPLISHING THE IMPOSSIBLE AT

CHATEAU DOMINGUE

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Photography by James Farmer

A pair of antique mirrors serve as backdrop for life-size statues and more.



Impossible is a word seldom heard at Chateau Domingue, a secluded warehouse just off West Alabama in Houston. A few yards away from the traffic and bustling pedestrians, is a warehouse surrounded by dusty cobbled areas, shaded buildings full of leaning and stacked 17th, 18th, and 19th century doors, and a French chateau garden complete with a running stone fountain. If you are wanting a centuries-old European chapel dismantled, brought to Texas, and reconstructed, Chateau Domingue can do it.

For over seven years, builders, renovators, designers, and anyone with a penchant for authentic European architecture have turned to Chateau Domingue. Owner Ruth Gay is considered to be one of the top sources for reclaimed European building materials, antiques, and garden elements. Known for her unique products and attentive customer service, she often oversees installation of items from her warehouse to clients' homes.

Chateau Domingue's owner maintains close contact with her sources in Europe and brings countless containers to Houston. She travels to Europe six times a year, visiting France, Italy, and Belgium with occasional side trips to Spain, England, Sweden, and Holland. The Gay family of five, summers annually in southern France. While vacationing, she scours the countryside, buying European antiques for her store. She stocks vast supplies of antique flooring, chandeliers, mantles, and stonework in her warehouse.

Among the designer's favorite items currently at Chateau Domingue are a pair of 15th century frescoes from a private chapel in Tuscany. She is particularly proud of a Renaissance period mantle cheminee and a garden fountain from an 18th century chateau. It must be difficult to leave such pieces at the store and not take them home!

Gay's own home was recently featured in a coffee table book, "The French Room" by Betty Lou Phillips. Her house is filled with furniture centuries old. If the furniture could talk, what stories they might tell. "It's all about the story!" she proclaims.

Ruth's passion for architecture, antiques, and beautiful things began at an early age. The daughter of a missionary father and a mother of European heritage, she grew up in Europe. As a child, she was "constantly redecorating; it was a focus on my surroundings." While building their own home, Gay and her husband realized the difficulty in finding authentic European architectural elements, thus the idea of Chateau Domingue was born.

Authenticity is important to Ruth Gay and nothing is "impossible" at Chateau Domingue.

Ruth Gay's appreciation for scale is seen in one-of-a-kind artwork, chandeliers, and urns — just some of Chateau Domingue's offerings.



A vast collection of metal architectural elements encourages exploration outside, too.

Just one example of architectural reconstruction meticulously executed by Gay and her crew.