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EDIT

Inspirational INTERIORS, *beautiful* GARDENS, *fascinating people, compelling stories*

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The sitting room of a Paris apartment by interior designer Jean-Louis Deniot

ENTRANCE HALL (*this page*) French limestone and black marble flooring creates a striking backdrop for a console from Robert Stadler's 'Cut Paste' series and Gió Ponti's 'Superleggera' chair by Cassina. SITTING ROOM (*opposite*) A Fifties blackened-wood rocking chair and Stéphane Parmentier's 'Stromboli' side table pick up on a 'From Above II' table by Hagit Pincovici

keep it cool

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A traditional Paris apartment in the gritty 10th arrondissement gave interior designer Jean-Louis Deniot an opportunity to balance its period details with contemporary furniture and references to the diverse neighbourhood and eclectic taste of its American owner





French interior designer Jean-Louis Deniot is very keen not to repeat himself. 'I strive not to do the same thing over and over,' he states. 'The problem is that clients often want what they've seen before.' This project, however, presented him with an opportunity to do something different. Most of the apartments he has decorated in the French capital have been in upmarket neighbourhoods. This one, however, is located on a busy boulevard in the gritty 10th arrondissement, not far from the Gare de l'Est.

The main reason Jean-Louis was attracted to the project was the flat's diversity of his neighbourhood. 'You have old Turkish men sitting next to these young Parisian hipsters in cafés,' he explains.

The owner chose this flat for several reasons. 'The layout is amazing,' he asserts. 'It's typical of Paris in that there is a long enfilade.' Other factors included its tall ceilings, 18 windows, original crown mouldings and floors, and the balcony that wraps itself around the three sides of the apartment. In general, Jean-Louis is not a fan of Haussmann-style flats like this one. 'There are about 30 million of them in Paris,' he declares, with a touch of exaggeration. 'It was like the Ikea of the times.' When confronted with them, he usually removes all the nineteenth-century architectural details. Here, though, he decided to leave them firmly in place. 'The owner is American and I felt that he was attached to all the typical Parisian elements,' he says.

'I WANTED TO DO SOMETHING FRENCH IN MY APARTMENT, BUT TO MAKE IT HIPPER AND MORE CONTEMPORARY'

'I wanted to do something French in my French apartment,' says the owner. 'But I didn't want to do Versailles. I was interested in somehow making it hipper and more contemporary.'

What Jean-Louis gave him is certainly a lot less stiff and formal. The client is a fan of Adolf Loos and the Vienna Secession, and the integration of strong geometric motifs and the use of faux marble on the bookshelves in the study are both nods to Loos' work. There are also a number of touches that reference the diversity of the neighbourhood – including North African carpets and bright African wax-print cotton fabrics used for cushions, pillows and upholstery throughout the apartment.

The furniture layout is also more laid-back than in many Jean-Louis projects. 'It deliberately had to be a little more haphazard,' he says. He did not include a sofa in the study (something he would habitually do) and placed a bed slap bang in the middle of the spare room. There are also more elements of contemporary design than usually found in his interiors. Examples include the Robert Stadler console in the hall and Stéphane Parmentier lava 'Stromboli' stool used as a side table in the sitting room.

That said, two spaces retain a more traditional vibe – the dining room and main bedroom. For the latter, the owner insisted on acquiring a gallery of classical portraits from a Paris flea market. 'I love art, but I think collecting it is an absurd hobby and a waste of money,' he declares, with refreshing candour. 'Having $100,000 paintings in here is something I would never do. I want my apartment to be pretty, I want decorative things on the wall, but I don't want fine art.'

The most quirky room is possibly the kitchen. Jean-Louis wanted it to look as if it had been there for decades. He chose vintage black Formica for the walls and units, and a patchwork of cement tiles for the floor. 'My aim was to give the impression that the floor had been damaged and then part of it had been repaired,' he says.

The most daring intervention is the runny paint effect on the sitting room walls, which appears to have been a victim of water damage. When Jean-Louis first suggested it, the idea was kicked into touch. 'It was outside my comfort zone,' admits the owner. 'I was afraid it would be too much.' Thus, the walls were initially painted plain grey for several months, before he decided that he was willing to take the plunge. In hindsight, he is happy he did: 'It ended up being very subtle. Friends come over and it takes 30 minutes before they even notice it' □

Jean-Louis Deniot: deniot.com

SITTING ROOM (*opposite*) A vintage Sixties chandelier by Gaetano Sciolari hangs over a curved sofa custom designed by Jean-Louis and upholstered in 'Pure Damask' wool-silk mix in taupe from Dedar, with a cushion in an African wax-print cotton providing a flash of bright colour and pattern. An untitled framed piece by Claudia Wiesler in coloured pencil, pencil and gold leaf on handmade paper tones with the decorative paint effects on the walls created by Florence Girette. Double doors lead to the main bedroom, where a quirky four-poster bed, bedside lamps with crystal bases and a striking bronze chandelier, all designed by Jean-Louis, create a distinctive look, complemented by a Serge Lesage handsewn leather 'Fayette' rug



DINING ROOM (*this page*) A mix of French art deco dining chairs covered with an African wax-print cotton and others from the Louis XVI period upholstered in a deliberately aged cotton-mix chenille called 'Etch' by Harlequin surround a perforated brass table designed by Jean-Louis. A polished rosewood Thirties sideboard sits in an alcove backed with foxed mirror tiles and displays an abstract sculpture by Steffen Christensen and a custom version of the 'Cornice Table Lamp' by Alexander Lamont. KITCHEN (*opposite*) Black vintage Formica units create an atmospheric backdrop for an original Achille Castiglioni table for Zanotta and chairs from Matter-Made set against an arresting patchwork of cement floor tiles from Couleurs & Matières

THE MOST QUIRKY ROOM IS POSSIBLY THE KITCHEN. JEAN-LOUIS WANTED IT TO LOOK AS IF IT HAD BEEN THERE FOR DECADES



BATHROOM (*this page*) An 'Astonian Brunel' bath by Aston Matthews and brass bath and shower fixtures from Waterworks are complemented by floor tiles in polished coffee stone marble and 'Rasetti' wallpaper from Designers Guild. A Fifties ceiling light designed by Afra and Tobia Scarpa, curtains in 'Trocadero' linen from Holland & Sherry and a sandstone 'Zeus' stool, designed by Prospero Rasulo for Zanotta, complete the look. SPARE ROOM (*opposite*) A custom four-poster bed, designed by Jean-Louis in iron with a distressed gold-leaf finish, is upholstered in 'Motif Mousse' from the Tissus Collection F2 by Robert Normand, which is the background for colourful cushions in African fabrics. The marble-effect custom wool rug is by Serge Lesage

