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HOOKED ON CLASSIC

Combining *classical Parisian* lines with unexpected interior flourishes, this *glamorous apartment* reflects its owner's *Francophile* leanings as well as its designer's confident eye

TEXT AND PRODUCTION IAN PHILLIPS
PHOTOGRAPHS STEPHAN JULLIARD/TRIPOD AGENCY

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In this glamorous apartment in Paris's 10th arrondissement, interior designer Jean-Louis Deniot (pictured) was tasked with creating an environment that reflected its owner's Francophile leanings while still remaining contemporary. Some of the numerous classic vintage pieces that make up the apartment's living room include a rounded 1950s blackened-wood rocking chair, 1960s gold chandelier by Gaetano Sciolari and a 1930s mahogany armchair (to the right of the fireplace), which has been reupholstered in a Toile de Tours fabric from Le Manach (lemanach.fr). The black lava-stone Stromboli sidetable alongside was designed by Stéphane Parmentier and produced by Ormonde Editions (ormonde-editions.com). Leaning against the large gilded mirror is a stucco sculpture – acquired by the owner – that picks up on the luxe gold theme. The artwork on the left-hand wall is an untitled coloured-pencil drawing by German artist Claudia Wieser.



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rench interior designer Jean-Louis Deniot is keen not to repeat himself. 'I strive not to do the same thing over and over,' he says. 'The problem is that

clients often insist on limiting themselves to what they've seen before.' This project, however, presented him with an opportunity to do something different. It is certainly quite atypical for Deniot. Most of the apartments he has previously decorated in the French capital have been in upscale neighbourhoods, while this one is located on a busy boulevard in the gritty 10th arrondissement, not far from the Gare de l'Est.

The main reason Deniot was attracted to the project was the client, a 38-year-old American who has been working as a computer programmer since the age of 14 and found himself newly wealthy thanks to his involvement with a hugely successful dot.com company. 'He's really laid back and absolutely adorable,' says Deniot. 'He's not only really up to date with new technologies, but also very knowledgeable about the classics.' Indeed, he took two years off to study Ancient Greek literature at New York's Columbia University.

The homeowner is also a firm Francophile. 'I just love Paris,' he gushes. Among the things he appreciates are the city's transport system, its 'super-mild' weather and the plethora of food stores. He also likes the ethnic diversity of his new neighbourhood. 'You have old Turkish men sitting next to these young Parisian hipsters in cafés,' he says. 'It's really cool.'

He visited about a dozen different flats in the area and chose this one for several reasons. 'The layout is amazing,' he asserts. 'It's very typical of Paris in that there is a long enfilade.' Other factors included its high ceilings, 18 windows, original crown mouldings and floors, and the balcony that wraps itself around the three sides of the apartment.

It was a brother of a friend who recommended that the homeowner contact Deniot to whip it into shape. 'Back then, I'd never heard of any interior designers,' he says. 'So I didn't know Jean-Louis was on the AD100 [Top Architects >



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The unusual paint effect on the walls in the living room, which was created by Florence Girette (florencegirette.com), perfectly complements a curved brocade sofa that was custom-designed by Deniot and upholstered in Pure Damask fabric from Dedar (dedar.com). The From Above II coffee table by Hagit Pincovici (hagit-p.com) displays twin gilt bronze candlesticks from the Louis XVI period and a glass sculpture created by Alexa Lixfeld (alexalixfeld.com), and the green wall sculpture made from painted steel was designed by Deniot. Adding further dimension to the space are graphic prints in the form of a Directoire-style armchair upholstered in Basket outdoor fabric from Kirkby Design (kirkbydesign.com), curtains from Robert Normand (robertnormand.com) and a patterned cushion covered in African wax fabric, a nod to the melting pot of cultures in the surrounding neighbourhood. Atop the Louis XVI-period gilded wood and marble console table is an array of objects from Nina Cho's Bent Mirror Series (ninacho.com).

THIS PAGE, CLOCKWISE FROM BELOW French limestone and black marble flooring lends a modern monochrome touch to the entrance hall, where pops of gold announce the home's classic Parisian flair. Underneath the 18th-century ornate gilded wood mirror is an Embroiderer Bench by Rooms, purchased from pamono.com; an abstract bronze sculpture by Steffen Christensen takes pride of place on a rosewood sideboard in the dining room. Suspended above the Denoit-designed perforated brass table is Michael Anastassiades' Mobile Chandelier 9 (michaelanastassiades.com). The entrance hall offers a glimpse of the dining room: on the left are a 1930s bronze wall light by Maxime Old and a Superleggera chair by Gio Ponti for Cassina (cassina.com).



and Designers] list and was an important guy.' He recalls their first meeting as being a little intimidating. 'Jean-Louis brought this army of super-fashionable people – this beautiful girl wearing six-inch heels and a couple of assistants,' he says. 'They marched through the apartment and issued their approval.'

Deniot is far from being a fan of Haussmann-style flats. 'There are about 30 million of them in Paris,' he says, with a touch of exaggeration. 'It was like the IKEA of the times.' When confronted with one, he usually removes all the 19th-century architectural details. But here, for once, he left them firmly in place. 'The owner is American and I felt he was very attached to all the typical Parisian elements,' he says. 'I wanted to do something French in my French apartment,' says the client, 'but I didn't want to do Versailles. I was interested in somehow making it hipper and more contemporary.'

What Deniot gave him is certainly looser and more with-it. The client is a fan of Adolf Loos and the Vienna Secession art movement, and the integration of strong geometric motifs is a homage to Loos, as is the use of faux marble >

A long enfilade, high ceilings, 18 windows, original crown mouldings and floors, and a wraparound balcony are what made this apartment stand out to the owner from a dozen others.




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The angular bronze pendant lamp in the kitchen is another bespoke Deniot piece, the table was designed in 1985 by Achille Castiglioni for Zanotta, and the chairs were bought from Matter-Made (mattermatters.com). Adding to the layered blues of the space are geometric cement floor tiles from Couleurs & Matières (couleurs-et-matieres.fr). The black kitchen units are fashioned from Formica.

on the bookshelves in the study. There are also a number of ethnic touches in the form of North African carpets and African wax fabrics. 'I thought it would be interesting and fun to reference the neighbourhood,' says Deniot. 'I explained to the client that the resulting decor is like Marie Antoinette in a kaftan.'

The furniture layout is also more laid back than in many of his projects. 'It deliberately had to be a little more haphazard,' he says. Deniot didn't include a sofa in the study (something he would habitually do) and placed the bed slap bang in the middle of the guestroom. There are also more elements of contemporary design than you would usually encounter in a Deniot interior. Examples include the Robert Stadler console table in the entrance hall and the Stéphane Parmentier lava sidetable in the living room.

That said, there are two spaces that retain a more traditional feel – the dining room and main bedroom. For the latter, the owner insisted on acquiring a gallery of classical portraits from Paris flea markets. 'I love art, but I think collecting it is an absurd hobby and a waste of money,' he says. '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 quirkiest room is probably the kitchen, which Deniot wanted to look as if it had been there for decades. He chose black Formica for the walls and units, and a patchwork of cement tiles for the floor. 'I wanted to give the impression that the floor had been damaged and that part of it had been repaired,' he says. The most daring intervention, however, is the runny-paint effect on the sitting room walls, which appear to have been victim to water damage. When Deniot first suggested it, the idea was kicked into touch. 'It was outside my comfort zone,' says the client. 'I was afraid it would be too much of an effect and would feel like the room was showing off too much.' Thus the walls were painted plain grey for several months before he decided to take the plunge. In hindsight, he's happy he did. 'It ended up being very subtle,' he says. 'Friends come over and won't notice it for 30 minutes and yet it adds so much visual interest to the room.'  **deniot.com**



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The study provides a plush reading nook, where a vintage wicker armchair by Gio Ponti is paired with a rug from the Hemp collection by Kinnasand (kinnasand.com) and a 1930s Margareta Köhler armchair and ottoman, which have been re-covered in Ohan fabric from Dedar. The elegant bookcase was specially created from painted green marble and stained mahogany; standing out against muted shades of grey is a Deniot-designed iron four-poster bed, fitted with Mousse fabric from Robert Normand (robertnormand.com). A 1940s plaster bird sculpture turned into a ceiling light provides illumination, and the marble-look rug was manufactured by Serge Lesage (sergelesage.com); above a 1930s writing desk in the main bedroom is a gallery wall with an eclectic range of vintage artworks; in the bathroom, taking inspiration from the Paris metro, are subway tiles from CE.SI. Ceramica (cesiceramica.it) and touches of Carrara marble.

