

# DESIGNERS AT HOME ELLE DECOR

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## HOW TO LIVE LIKE ARMANI

+

AND THE FRICKS!

AND DELIA KENZA

AND JULIE HILLMAN

AND ALEXANDRE  
BIRMAN

AND TWO VERY CHIC  
MILANESE...





The living room of a Paris apartment renovated by Amélie Dian and interior architect and designer Louis Denavaut.

## WOULD YOU WEAR THIS ROOM?

Fashion designer and serial renovator Amélie Dian brings her stylish eye to the design of an 18th-century apartment in the heart of Paris.

By ELISA LIPSKY-KARASZ Photographs by MATTHIEU SALVAING



The living room's custom sectional is in a Dedar fabric, the Gino Sarfatti lamp is from Galerie Kreo, and the artwork is by Kim Yong-ik.



**F**or most people, moving homes is something to be avoided at all costs. Settling down is the goal, even if it means sometimes having to settle. But for Parisian fashion designer Amélie Dian, it's an exciting quest for the best—and an excuse to visit the flea market in Saint-Ouen. She has moved more than 15 times over the past couple of decades. “I changed lives several times, that’s why,” she says.

Creative projects are her vocation: She co-founded the rock ‘n’ roll-infused brand Zadig & Voltaire in the late '90s before stints at Kenzo and Comptoir des Cottonniers, as well as consulting projects for LVMH. Recently she succeeded the late Lucien Pellat-Finet at his eponymous cashmere brand (her first collection appears this fall).

She is the type of effortlessly chic French woman who runs around in



Fashion designer Amélie Dian in the living room, where the curtains are in a Nobilis fabric and the parquet flooring is original.

relaxed jeans and a sharply tailored jacket, with spotless Celine sneakers and perfectly mussed blond hair. She is equally adept at snagging the best seat at the corner café as at spotting the best pieces at the auction house Drouot.

So when she walked into an 18th-century building in the genteel 7th Arrondissement in 2023, she knew she had found something extraordinary. Behind heavy, chipped wooden doors was a cobblestone courtyard and a crumbling but sweeping staircase; it climbed to a small apartment on the second floor. The petite entrance belied what lay behind: a grand double-height salon with huge windows overlooking a jasmine-filled garden.

“I thought, Wow, you are in the middle of Paris, and it’s like you’re in the country,” she says. The salon was filled with books from the family that had occupied the apartment for nearly a ►





Denavaut designed the kitchen's stained oak table. A chair from a flea market has a seat in a Thorp of London fabric.

century. She had been looking for an expressive outlet (her main residence, where she lives with her husband and two teens, is nearby), and after months of coaxing she was able to persuade the heirs to sell her the apartment.

From the start Dian knew she wanted to preserve the space's sense of history while injecting it with some vibrant new energy. She tapped Louis Denavaut, a rising French interior architect and designer known more for his 1970s take on contemporary life than the 1770s. (His projects include striking pink and black offices for fashion executive Youssef Marquis and a bronze-filled store for the ready-to-wear brand Hartford.)

Denavaut immediately fell for the richly layered space, which reminded him of Serge Gainsbourg's legendarily *louche* apartment nearby.

But at first what Denavaut proposed doing was something of a departure, "much more geometric, with much more wood," he says. Dian pushed back, wanting to focus on the distinctly Parisian characteristics of the space. "At first I had some hesitation," Denavaut admits. He was wary of falling into pastiche, but he was convinced, in part, by the deceptively simple fabrics Dian sourced from European textile houses, such as the Dedar linen she found for the furnishings and the Nobilis material she discovered for the curtains.

Working with another creative mind "is like ping-pong," Denavaut says. "I really like it. You have someone who can understand you."

Together Dian and Denavaut decided to remain faithful to the salon's rich oxblood-red ceiling, though it ►



The kitchen cabinets are painted in Farrow & Ball's School House White. Sink fittings by Axor; dishes by Astier de Villatte.





In the entry the teak console is custom, and the 19th-century pedestal table is French.

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—AMELIE DIAN

was repainted. They also restored parquet de Versailles wood flooring in the salon that looks convincingly original. In addition they installed château-worthy pierre de Bourgogne tiles in the entry, kitchen, and three bathrooms, punctuated with small black cabochons (another nod to Gainsbourg, whose

living room featured a similar tiling pattern).

As a counterpoint to all the tradition, Denavaut injected a bit of electricity into the space with sleek banquettes for the hall and kitchen, as well as an oversize minimalist sofa for the salon facing the gardens. Dian, who

has long collected art, did her part by amassing several abstract pieces, installing a painting by the 20th-century Korean artist Kim Yōng-ik over the seating area facing a work by French contemporary artist Jean Charles Blais. A self-described design junkie, Dian visited favorites like ►





The primary bedroom's Louis XVI desk was found in a château in the South of France.



Galerie Kreo and Galerie Stéphane Olivier, as well as combing through auction houses like Christie's and Drouot and tapping Spanish antiques dealer Serge Castella. All this legwork turned up such finds as a small Cy Twombly painting, a 19th-century walnut sideboard, and a Giacometti-inspired coffee table.

"I was really lucky, because she has great taste," Denavaut says. "With some clients it can be tricky."

Together they conceived of the primary bedroom as a cocooning hotel room, with every inch measured to

allow for paneled closets and a generous marble tub in the en suite bathroom. In the summer months, a trail of jasmine spills over the bedroom windowsill, just as Dian envisioned when she first glimpsed the space. Denavaut says, "It's my first cozy project. My projects are usually much more minimalist."

Now that it's finished, and a family has leased the home from Dian, she is already on the hunt for the next project to tackle with Denavaut. "We created a story, with a vision," Dian says. "So now we're ready to start again." ■

FROM TOP: Custom closets in the bedroom; the chair is Louis XV, and the curtains are of a Nobilis fabric. A vintage Swedish lamp rests on a custom nightstand. The primary bath's tub is in Bianco Lasa Vena Oro marble with fittings by Axor; artwork by Cy Twombly.