

VOCAL LIVING

AUSTRALIA

CONSUMER MAGAZINE OF THE YEAR *

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MODERN
LUXE

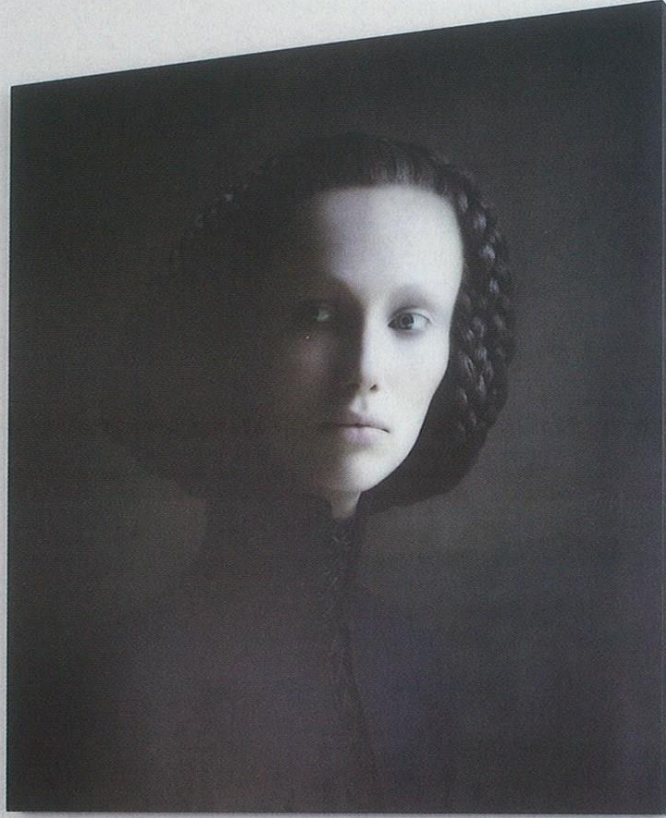
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MILAN REPORT

INSPIRATIONAL IDEAS FROM THE WORLD'S GREATEST DESIGN FAIR
THEATRICAL SPACES IN A MILANESE INTERIOR BY PIERO LISSONI



In the sitting room of this Paris sanctuary in Saint-Germain-des-Prés, photographer Desiree Dolron's portrait Xteriors VI echoes the moody feel of a Campana brothers sofa (see overleaf). Details, last pages.

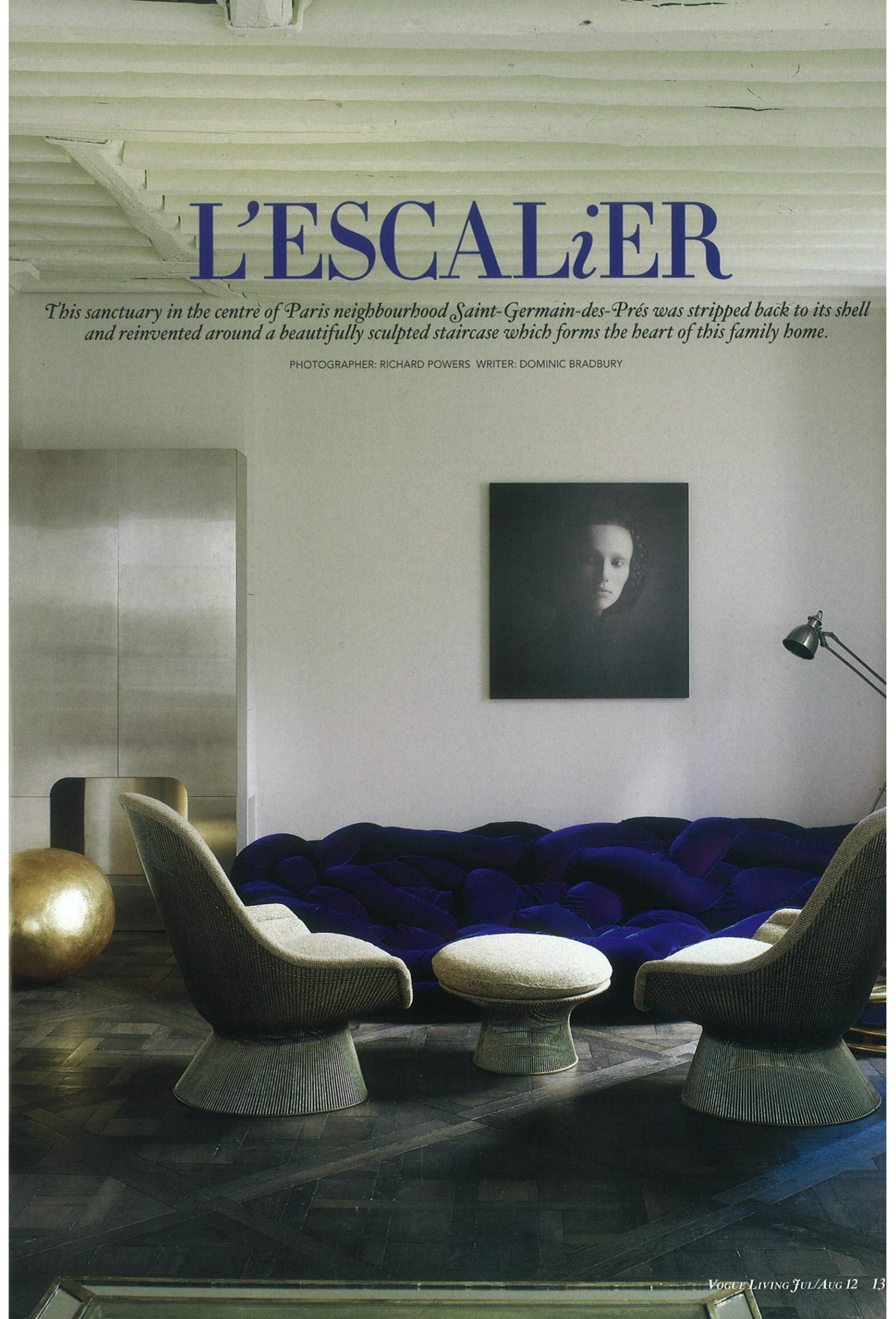


In the dining room, a Christian Liaigre-designed table is surrounded by Arne Jacobsen's mid-century 'Series 7' chairs bought from Paris's most famous flea market, Marché aux Puces de St-Ouen (known locally as 'Les Puces' or 'The Fleas'). The parquet floor is new; part of the stripped-back reinvention of every space in the house. The curtains are by the project's interior designer Elodie Sire, who also made some of the bespoke pieces in the home. The cast-iron handrail and balustrade for the stairs are from Marché Paul-Bert stall at Les Puces. OPPOSITE: a vivid blue Campana brothers sofa, from Arums gallery in Paris, provides relaxed seating in the sitting room next to a 1970s steel armoire from Galerie Yves Gaston and a golden egg from Yveline Antiquités in Paris. The moody portrait above the sofa is Xteriors VI by photographer Desiree Dolron. Details, last pages.

L'ESCALIER

This sanctuary in the centre of Paris neighbourhood Saint-Germain-des-Prés was stripped back to its shell and reinvented around a beautifully sculpted staircase which forms the heart of this family home.

PHOTOGRAPHER: RICHARD POWERS WRITER: DOMINIC BRADBURY



Two sections of an 18th-century cabinet (a family piece) have been transformed into console tables flanking a cream sofa by Caravane. Above the sofa is a striking artwork by a family friend, artist Philippe Pasqua. OPPOSITE: a large Argentinian chandelier hangs over a portion of the staircase which climbs the four levels of the house. The stool and table are from an antique store in the local Saint-Germain neighbourhood.



THESE PAGES: the main bedroom features a balcony overlooking the residence's private courtyard. The owner often eats here with her two young children, eschewing the kitchen for the views from up high in this 'ivory tower'. The lion photograph is by Nick Brandt and behind the bed (from the Courran Shop) are vintage metallic sheets used as wall hangings bought from Yves Gaston at the Biennale des Antiquaires in Paris. The blue lamp was found at a local secondhand market.



*"We always have breakfast in my bed.
We don't use the kitchen a lot"*



The main bathroom sits alongside the owner's bedroom on the top floor and, says designer Sire, exemplifies the home's "rich mixture of furniture, pictures, periods and materials". The drawing of a lady is by Picasso. An old Spanish marble fountain is used as a sink, near a graceful curved wall housing a cupboard. A ceiling light from a Paris market hangs above the Devon & Devon bath. The Bokja Design sofa is from Paris store Merci.

At the top of the stairs, a collection of horse photographs by family friend Aline Coquelle frame the entry to the main bathroom (PREVIOUS PAGE). The jewel-coloured 'Flower Power' sofa by Beirut brand Bokja Design is from Merci concept store in Paris. OPPOSITE PAGE: interior designer Sire custom-made the children's bunk beds. Seen through the doorway is the ensuite, with a long 1920s stone school sink from Les Puces market running under an oval mirror from Yveline Antiquités.



IN THE HEART of the Saint-Germain-des-Prés neighbourhood is an oasis which encloses a private courtyard and leads to a secret garden – a rarity in this part of Paris. The owner calls it “a golden cage”, where she and her family can enjoy a sense of quiet and calm and, yet, within five minutes’ walk, savour the restaurants, stores and galleries of bustling Saint-Germain or step through the doors of the Musée d’Orsay.

“Saint-Germain is the best place to live in Paris,” she says. “Everybody’s happy and beautiful and it’s an easy place, with lots of children on our street. You don’t need to leave Saint-Germain.”

The house itself is arranged across four floors, plus an entry level, all connected by a winding, sculpted staircase. There’s an atmosphere of informality and the spaces are decorated with photography, art, vintage pieces and flea-market treasures woven with a dextrous touch by interior designer Elodie Sire, who founded her own design practice D.mesure five years ago. Following a reinvention that stripped the building back to its bones, the house now feels cohesive and light.

“There was a lot of work to do,” says Sire, who has known the owner for many years and collaborated with her on previous residential projects. “There are four floors of living space and every one was emptied. We worked on the walls, the floors... Every space is new.”

The owner bought the place in the summer of 2010, after targeting a precise quarter of Saint-Germain. “The house was in bad shape,” she says. “It had been owned by an ambassador but his wife didn’t want to live there. I knew it was special because finding a house like this with a terrace – there was no garden then – is almost impossible.”

Some internal walls were removed to create more fluid and open rooms, especially for the central living area. This helped increase the level of light, as did painting the remaining walls, ceilings and exposed wooden beams white. New parquet floors were laid and the stairs redone, along with the addition of a sinuous new section connecting the living room with the bedrooms two floors above.



OPPOSITE PAGE, FAR LEFT: the top-floor dressing room adjacent to the bathroom, reflected in a wall of vintage mirror glass custom-made by Sire and using salvaged material from Marché Paul-Bert stall at Les Puces. THIS PAGE: glossy Boffi units provide a contemporary backdrop in the kitchen, in contrast with the secondhand rustic wooden table from Marché Paul-Bert and industrial-look chairs from Merci. RIGHT: the home’s exterior, spilling over with greenery. Details, last pages.



Sire incorporated pieces of architectural salvage as well as secondhand finds into the fabric of the house: she used antique mirror glass for the dressing room and the shower in the main bathroom (rather than tiles); an old Spanish fountain functions as a sink in the same space; and an elongated 1920s stone school sink found a new home in the children’s bathroom. Much of the furniture was also sourced at Paris flea markets although some of the elements are bespoke, such as the children’s wooden bunk beds which were designed by Sire.

Beloved photography collected by the owner includes many pictures taken by friends. A favourite is the enigmatic portrait of a woman by Desiree Dolron in the living room, hanging above the vivid blue Campana brothers sofa. A lion image by wildlife photographer Nick Brandt and various images of horses decorate the main bedroom and bathroom at the top of the house – which has the feel of an escapist retreat at the top of an ivory tower.

“I’m always in my bedroom – we even eat in the bedroom with the children,” says the owner. “It has a different atmosphere to the rest of the house and a balcony with a view of the garden. We always have breakfast in my bed. We don’t use the kitchen a lot.”

For Sire, this floor was one of the most delightful aspects of the project. “I love the rich mixture of furniture, pictures, periods and materials,” says Sire. “The main bathroom represents it very well for me: an open space without technology, just a room where every item is beautiful and unexpected.”

“It’s a magical way of living,” says the owner. “And even though we are in the middle of Paris, we don’t hear a thing – it’s like being in the countryside. If you want to be in the crowd in Saint-Germain, you can, but you can also be totally alone. It’s a huge privilege.” VL