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# CONTENTS

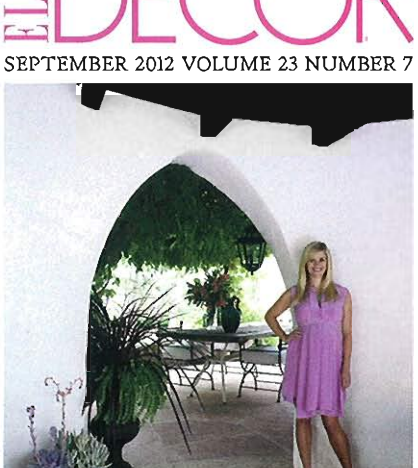



174

The library of designer Jean-Louis Deniot's Paris apartment.

ON THE COVER: Reese Witherspoon at her weekend retreat in Ojai, California. "Charmed Circle," page 166. Photography by William Waldron; produced by Anita Sarsidl. Dress by Phillip Lim and shoes by Jimmy Choo; hair by Lona Vigi and makeup by Robin Fredriksz of the Magnet Agency, Los Angeles.

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## DEPARTMENTS

44 **EDITOR'S PAGE**
*By Michael Boodro*

48 **ON THE SCENE**
The people and events behind the making of this issue

52 **MAILBOX**
Our readers write

54 **STYLE SHEET**
What we've seen, what we've heard

59 **WHAT'S HOT!**
Dispatches from the world of design

68 **SHOP TALK**
Sensational stores around the world

70 **NEWS FLASH**

72 **TALENT**
Commune teams up with Exquisite Surfaces for a cutting-edge take on traditional flooring and tiles. *By Caren Kurlander*

74 **TREND ALERT**
Faux bois goes against the grain, showing up in surprising colors and unusual places. *By Parker Bowie*

78 **SHORTLIST**
The 12 things fashion icon Karl Lagerfeld can't live without

80 **IN THE SHOWROOMS**
What's new to the trade

82 **GREAT IDEAS**
When it comes to displaying artworks, the more the merrier

86 **ART SHOW**
Emil Lukas turns to humble, elemental materials to create his mysterious, mesmerizing works. *By Hilarie M. Sheets*

90 **DOSSIER**
The poetic visions of Frank Moore, Islamic art's enduring appeal, and more. *By Laura Regensdorf*

93 **TOOLBOX**
Smart products for stylish homes. *By Mieke ten Have*

96 **PUNCH LIST**
What you need to renovate now

99 **DESIGN SOLUTIONS**
A Los Angeles designer infuses her Craftsman-style cottage with 21st-century cool. *By Michael Lassell*

SIMON UPTON

# SEVENTH HEAVEN

*In an unexpected arrondissement of Paris, designer Jean-Louis Deniot applies his signature vision of low-key luxe to a run-down apartment, transforming it into his own personal haven*

TEXT BY IAN PHILLIPS · PHOTOGRAPHY BY SIMON UPTON · PRODUCED BY ANITA SARSIDI



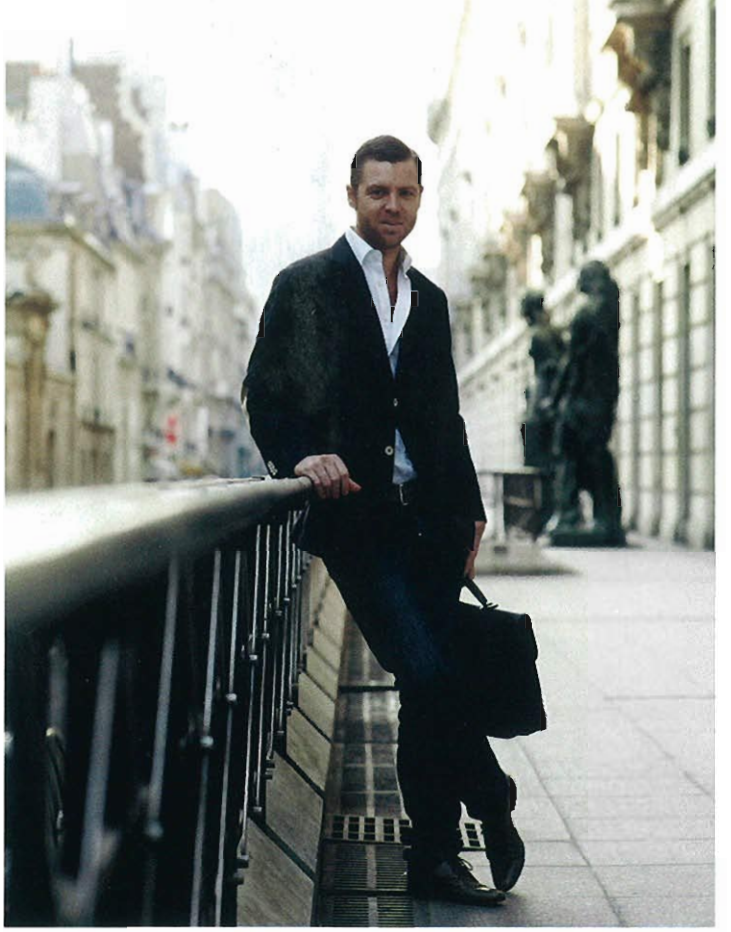
In the living room of Jean-Louis Deniot's Paris apartment, the walls and ceiling feature a mural evocative of the sky, by Mathias Kiss. A pair of 1960s Knoll sofas, upholstered in a Zimmer + Rohde fabric, and a Directoire chair surround a cocktail table by Ado Chale, and a parchment side table by Paul Frankl holds a lamp from the '60s. A photograph by Eric Baudelaire hangs above a custom-made Turkish-marble mantel; the candlesticks are by Bjorn Wiinblad. See Resources.


PIRANESI

*IN THE DINING ROOM* of interior designer Jean-Louis Deniot's new Paris apartment hangs a drawing by Konstantin Kakanias. Deniot bought it largely for the inscription in its bottom-left corner: "If you like me, great. If you don't, keep coming back." In the past decade, the red-hot young French decorator has developed a roster of clients who not only like him, but also keep coming back.

Until recently, such success left Deniot little time to deal with his own home. His previous base in Paris was a petite, 485-square-foot one-bedroom across the street from the café La Palette in Saint-Germain-des-Prés. Cézanne and Picasso both famously drank there, but for Deniot the area had become, he says, "too noisy and touristy." What he found when searching for its replacement did not initially fit his criteria: a 1,200-square-foot, second-floor apartment in the 7th arrondissement. "I was actually looking for something bigger and higher up," he recalls.

The place was also incredibly run-down. Yet Deniot was seduced by its 11 windows and smart layout. A series of four linked rooms runs along the front of the apartment, and there are no corridors—hence, no wasted space. And the location was ideal: in the heart of the Carré Rive Gauche antiques district and just a two-minute walk from his office on








**FACING PAGE, FROM TOP:** Deniot near his home in the 7th arrondissement. The living room's Cubist lamp is from the 1930s, and the rug is custom made. **THIS PAGE:** An 18th-century family portrait hangs in the library, whose walls are covered in oak paneling and a bark-inspired printed canvas; a vintage Gio Ponti chair is paired with a Jacques Adnet desk and C. Jeré lamp, and Deniot designed the rug and sofa, which is upholstered in a Mulberry Home wool. See Resources.











A view of the living room and the master bedroom from the dining room. **FACING PAGE, CLOCKWISE FROM TOP LEFT:** In the entry hall, a pedestal by Deniot holds a Philippe Angot sculpture; the light fixtures are by Gino Sarfatti, and the walls are painted to match the marble floor. Deniot designed the brass bench, the photograph is by Valérie Belin, and the sconce is by Georges Jouve. In the master bath, the cabinetry is painted to mimic the plaster-fluted walls, the custom-made medicine cabinet is flanked by Felix Agostini sconces, and the Duravit sink has fittings by Dornbracht. The credenza in the entry is by Finn Juhl and Niels Vodder, and the mirror is by Hervé Van der Straeten; the striped vessel is by Wedgwood, and the lamp is by Stiffel. See Resources.



Jacques Adnet chairs surround a 1940s dining table by Roger Thibier, the chandelier is from the 1840s, and the rug is custom made; the drawing is by Konstantin Kakanias, the sconce is by Willy Daro, and the walls are sheathed in a custom-made wallpaper. **FACING PAGE:** The cabinetry in the kitchen is clad in hammered silver, and the countertops and floor are marble; the brass-and-opaline light fixture is by Stilnovo, and the sink is by Franke. See Resources.



rue de Verneuil. "I always thought this was an area where you lived when you were older," says Deniot, "but, not at all! What I love is that it's quiet without being dead. You really feel like you're in a village."

The designer approached the project very much as he would for a client. The furnishings, for instance, were all bought specifically for the apartment. He also asked himself the most basic of questions in his line of work: "What should an interior of today look like?" The response—and end result—is thoroughly grounded in tradition.

Deniot has a love for neoclassicism and a knack for taking historical references and updating them in a sophisticated way. "Many people think you can create an effect through a form of provocation," he explains, "by juxtaposing something very classical with something very contemporary. For me, things should be a lot more subtle." A perfect example is the delicate trompe-l'oeil sky in the living room, which resembles those you find on the ceilings of European palaces. Deniot gave it his own twist by using it on the walls too.

The other wall treatments are equally eye-catching. For the library, a pattern inspired by bark was laser-printed on canvas. In the dining room, the gold-and-pearl horizontal lines on the custom



wallpaper were created by applying successive layers of paint, varnish, and marble powder. Meanwhile, the stripes in the guest bath are exactly the same width—3.43 inches—as those used by the French conceptual artist Daniel Buren. "Buren has been working with stripes for 40 years," says Deniot. "If anyone knows something about the right proportions, it's him."

As for Deniot, he knows how to create elegant interiors that don't break the bank. For custom pieces, he has a network of affordable craftsmen around the globe. Both the prototype brass bench in the entry and the hammered-silver-clad cabinetry in the kitchen were made in Morocco. The latter he paired to striking effect with four types of marble with varying striations. He also loves rummaging for a bargain. Among his best finds were six Jacques Adnet dining chairs, originally designed for the UNESCO headquarters in Paris. Two weeks after spotting a set in an antiques shop, he came across another at a flea market for a tenth of the price.

But sticking to 20th-century pieces would have been too predictable. Instead, Deniot mixed in the cutting edge and the classical. A photograph by Eric Baudelaire, for instance, is of an industrial wasteland. "I love that it's so poetic, whereas if you actually went there, I'm sure you'd want to shoot yourself in two seconds," he jokes. There are also Roman-style urns and marble statuettes, as well as antique portraits. The one in the library was given to Deniot by his grandmother and depicts an 18th-century ancestor. Making one's mark evidently runs in the family. ■





The master bedroom's wall covering is by Le Manach, and Stilnovo light fixtures are suspended above bedside tables Deniot designed for Collection Pierre; the alcove is covered in a velvet by Zimmer + Rohde, and the C. Jeré wall sculpture was purchased at auction. **FACING PAGE:** Alternating strips of French and Portuguese limestone in the guest bath emulate the proportions of a Daniel Buren artwork; the Duravit tub has Dornbracht fittings. See Resources.