

ELLE DECOR

OCTOBER

CELEBRATING 35 YEARS OF
THE BEST ROOMS IN THE WORLD

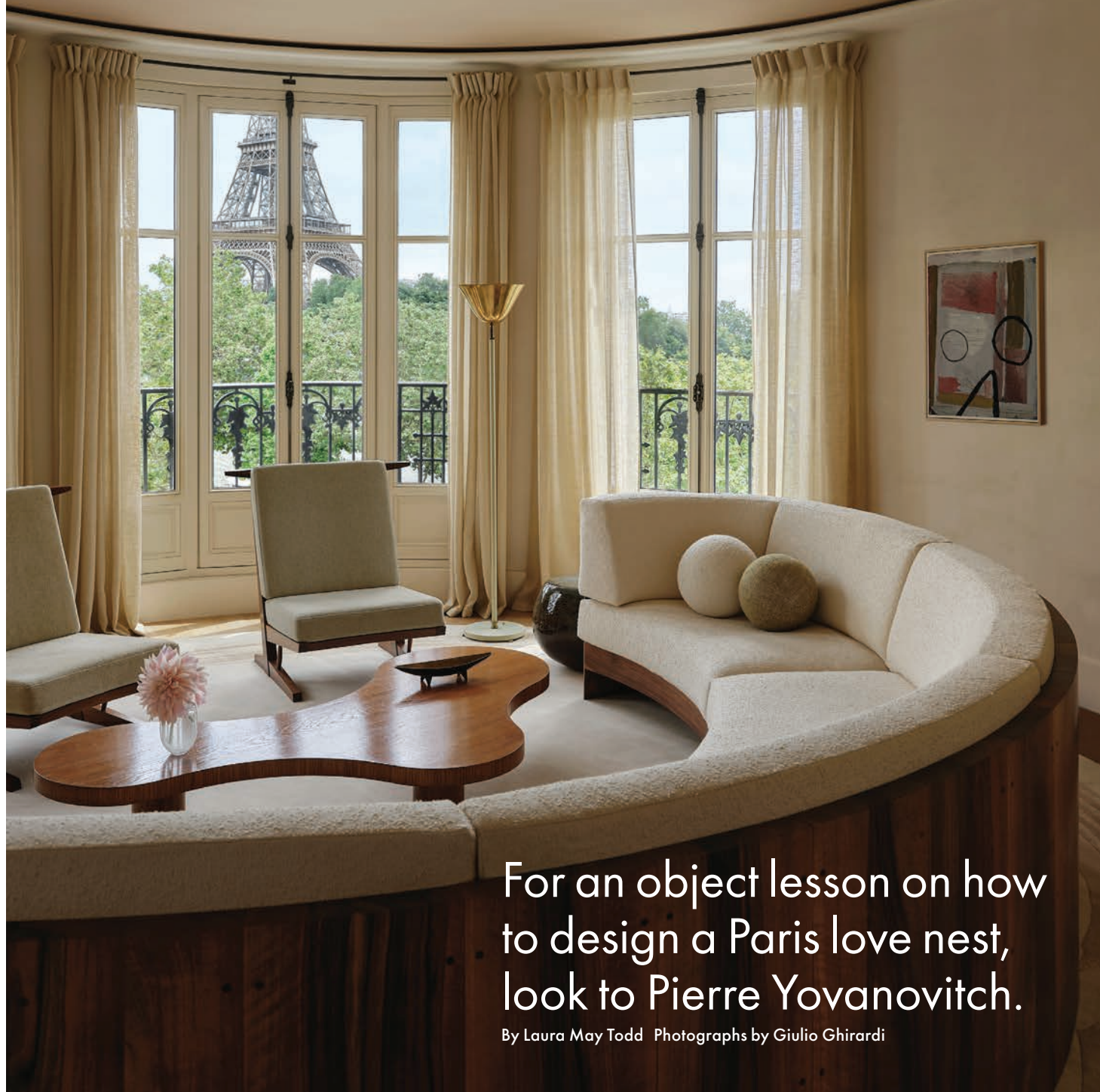


Everything We Know
About Decorating Now

Design's Top Stars Dish
on Style Sins—and Virtues

The Perfect Paris Love Nest
from Pierre Yovanovitch

CIRCLE D'AMOUR



For an object lesson on how to design a Paris love nest, look to Pierre Yovanovitch.

By Laura May Todd Photographs by Giulio Ghirardi

In a Paris apartment designed by Pierre Yovanovitch, the main hallway doubles as a library. Vintage table by Maison Royère; ceiling fresco by Matthieu Cossé.

OPPOSITE: The living room's sofa and ball cushions are by Pierre Yovanovitch Mobilier. Vintage chairs by George Nakashima; vintage cocktail table by Maison Royère; artwork by Daniel Buren. For details, see Resources.





Paris, it is often said, is the city of love. It's a cliché, sure, but for some, it very much feels like the truth. For a French Lebanese couple who recently renovated a pied-à-terre here, Paris is the setting for a joyous second act. Both the wife and the husband were previously divorced, with children from their first marriages. "It was love at first sight" when they met, she says. They settled in Beirut but set their sights on a Parisian getaway—"a place with a view, like out of a movie."

The apartment they found—in a 1925 Haussmannian building wedged between the Trocadéro gardens and the Seine—is indisputably cinematic. The living room's curving wall of French doors faces the ultimate Parisian symbol: a perfectly framed vista of the Eiffel Tower.

From the start, the couple knew who would bring it to life. They had fallen in love with the work of the ELLE DECOR A-List Titan Pierre Yovanovitch when they purchased a sofa from his furniture line for their home in Beirut. They admired the deft way he marries a modern sensibility with historical settings. At his own 17th-century castle in Provence, for instance, he softened the dramatic Provençal architecture with midcentury-modern furniture and contemporary art. His mastery of line and perspective was a match for their vision. "His work is so strong architecturally," the wife says. "And that was important to us."

When he first glimpsed the apartment, a 2,300-square-foot space laden with ornate moldings and heavy marble mantels, Yovanovitch instinctively knew that it would be better off liberated from its history. "It was really old-school," he says of the space, previously home to a book



collector for several decades. "Sometimes I like to keep the past, but in this case the architecture was quite heavy."

He swept away the rectangular rooms and replaced them with curved walls that nudge one's attention toward the spectacle outside. The entry leads to a circular wood-lined library where a small window frames the view of the Eiffel Tower like a postage stamp. Overhead, Yovanovitch commissioned the artist Matthieu Cossé to paint a semi-abstract fresco depicting the neighboring gardens and river. "The sky in Paris can be gray, and these clients come from the Mediterranean," he explains. "They like color and light. We wanted to bring in some life."

A trio of gouged-wood doors—made of solid oak whose surface has been hand-mottled by an artisan—leads from the library to the interior rooms. The most lavish among

them is the formal living room, where curved walls now create a perfect room in the round, complete with a U-shaped walnut-framed sofa oriented toward the corner window and its dramatic panorama. The ceiling is painted in a cream-toned gradient that gradually lightens to white as it reaches the French doors, giving the impression that the sun is streaming in even on the cloudiest days.

The living room sits between the primary suite—a neutral space with a connecting dressing room with cupboards clad in sage Fortuny fabric—and a smaller, more intimate den. Here, the designer introduced color and texture: gridded wood panels on the walls, painted white yet with the grain still visible underneath; a chartreuse ceiling meant to evoke the treetops in the adjacent garden; and a smooth stone fireplace. For artwork, he hung a collage by Daniel

Buren and a painting of lovebirds by Camille Henrot. In the center of the room sits a wooden table by the London design studio Doshi Levien, with colorful edging inspired by the decorative borders of Indian saris.

Since the apartment functions as a getaway and not the owners' primary residence, the couple felt they could make some sacrifices. They decided to forgo a formal dining room and to shrink the kitchen to a petite space that Yovanovitch spruced up with mint-green cabinets and hand-painted tiles. But the home, after all, was never meant for the travails of daily life. For its owners, it's a place to celebrate a love story that blossomed in the City of Light. "When we're here, we spend a lot of time in the living room in front of the Eiffel Tower," says the wife, "taking pictures like tourists." ■

OPPOSITE: Pierre Yovanovitch in the living room. Custom rug by Pierre Yovanovitch and Galerie Diurne.


LEFT: The designer worked with Atelier Mériguet-Carrère to develop custom paint colors for the space, like the chartreuse on the den's ceiling. Custom sofa and armchair by Pierre Yovanovitch Mobilier; cocktail table by Doshi Levien; circa-1940 floor lamp by Carl-Axel Acking; artworks (from left) by Daniel Buren and Camille Henrot.



The kitchen's custom cabinetry is paired with a backsplash in tiles hand-painted by artist Matthieu Cossé. Fittings by Dornbracht.

OPPOSITE: In the dining room, a custom table by Matthias Kohn is surrounded by vintage Pierre Jeanneret chairs and a custom bench in a Pierre Frey Le Manach fabric. Artwork by Imi Knoebel.





In a child's bedroom, the circular cove ceiling is painted in a custom burgundy. Bed linens by Treca; lamp and rug by Pierre Yovanovitch Mobilier.

OPPOSITE: Custom mirrors by Vitrines Lelièvre Driot reflect the Eiffel Tower in the main bathroom. Sconces by Santa & Cole.



"The sky in Paris can be gray.
We wanted to bring in some life."
—Pierre Yovanovitch