

French POLISH

Organic curves, precise design and subtle shots of soft pink all contribute to the très-chic reno of this Parisian apartment

PHOTOGRAPHY Stephan Julliard
WORDS Ian Phillips

LIVING ROOM
'I knew I wanted this sofa,' says designer Sarah Dray of the DS-600 from de Sede. 'It's a real statement.'

Chandelier; rug; **Moon bookcases**, all Sarah Dray. **Coffee tables**, Beige Avenue. **LC4 chaise longue** by Le Corbusier, Charlotte Perriand & Pierre Jeanneret for Cassina. **Armchair** by Olivier Santini for Mojow. **Vases** (on mantel) by Jaimal Odedra. **Ceramics** (on table) by Antoinette Faragallah, Martin Stuer and Sandra Zeenni. **Sculptures** (on cases) by Jean-Pierre Bonardot, Pierre Martinon, Léontine Furcy, Chandler McLellan and Thomas Lévy



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he Paris-based interior designer Sarah Dray has an obsession with neatness. ‘In my own apartment, nothing is ever out of place,’ she says. ‘When things are messy, it makes me depressed.’

That fondness for rigour is in evidence in the projects she creates. She confesses to a love of symmetry, favours strong lines and likes for everything to be just so. This apartment located on the French capital’s Right Bank is no exception.

The entry hall features a stone floor laid out in a strict, grid-like pattern. The pared-down panelling in the main reception rooms gives the walls a regular rhythm, and the sinks in the primary bathroom are housed in an arched niche. And if there is one design detail she favours more than any other, it is fluting. ‘It adds a sumptuous, bespoke touch,’ she explains.

Before seeing this apartment, owner Marie had previously visited dozens of others, but always alone. ‘My husband places great trust in me,’ she explains. ‘He always says he doesn’t need to see a place. If I like it, then he’ll automatically like it too.’ As fate would have it, they ended up checking out this one together. ‘On the day of the appointment, Pierre’s alarm clock didn’t go off,’ she continues. ‘So he was still at home and I managed to persuade him to come with me.’ What they discovered was not particularly prepossessing. There were old-school squat toilets and a plethora of stains from successive water leakages. As for the electrics, they were apparently ‘*un drame!*’ The gut renovation involved the space being largely reconfigured.

Among other things, Sarah extended the kitchen by enclosing a light well and created a number of well-aligned openings in the reception rooms. ‘I don’t really like doors,’ she says. ‘The more a space is free flowing, the better it is.’

She reinstated a number of typical Haussmann-style features – not only the wall mouldings, but also crenellated cornices, chevron parquet and marble fireplaces. She also tends to favour a calm, soothing palette (ask her for one thing you’ll never find in her interiors and she replies ‘the colour red’). Pierre requested the pink primary bathroom and Sarah responded by pairing an expressively veined blush-toned onyx with a wonderfully textural travertine.

The first piece of furniture to find its way into the apartment was the striking four-metre-long curving De Sede sofa in the living room. ‘For me, it brings extraordinary character to any space. It’s like a work of art,’ declares Sarah. In the dining room next door, she installed an arrangement of dozens of custom ceiling lights made from alabaster – one of her favourite materials.

Sarah’s approach to decorating children’s rooms, meanwhile, is to not make them look too childish. Here, she fitted all three with open bathrooms. ‘That way, each of the girls can enjoy their own independence,’ explains Sarah. ‘Once they close the door, it’s as if they have their own studio apartment.’ Which, with a bit of luck, they keep nice and tidy.

sarahdray.com

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THE OWNERS

This Parisian apartment belongs to Marie, a doctor, and her dentist husband, Pierre. The couple have three daughters – Manon, Louison and Paloma, aged six to 13. They asked Paris-based interior designer Sarah Dray to renovate their classic, Haussmann-style apartment.

THE PROPERTY

The 225m² unit is situated in a building dating from the early 20th century. It features a spacious entry hall, off which is the kitchen, the dining room, the living room and a guest WC. Off a further corridor is the primary suite on one side and the three girls’ en-suite bedrooms on the other.

DINING ROOM

'I wanted to give the impression of a starlit sky,' says Sarah of the custom ceiling lights in alabaster and brass.

Metal and Calacatta Oro **table**, Sarah Dray, 0414 **chairs**, Gallotti&Radice. **Bronze 1 dish** (on table) by Helle Damkjaer, Galerie Carole Decombe. **Painting** by Guy Leclercq, Galerie Dutko. Still Life **sculptures** by Martin & Dowling, Mouvements Modernes gallery. **Console**, AM.PM. Vintage glass and metal **wall lights**; similar, 1stDibs. **Flooring**, Studio Parquet



DINING AREA

'I'm not a fan of using a huge amount of colour,' says Sarah. 'I prefer to keep the backdrop and furniture neutral and add in brighter bursts through accessories and artwork.'

Artwork by Victor Vasarely. Baba **chairs**, Emmanuelle Simon. Alabaster **chandelier**; leather and oak **bench**, both Sarah Dray. Travertine **table**, Beije Avenue. Vintage ceramic **dish**, KRD gallery



KITCHEN

'The aim was for the island to look like a bar counter in a typical French brasserie,' notes Sarah of the fluted patinated metal design.

Worktop in Taj Mahal marble, Marbrerie de l'Emperador. **Tap**, Gessi. **Artwork** by John Carter and Jean-Pierre Le Bars, both Galerie Wagner. **Ceramics** and **glassware** (on shelf), CFOC. **Pitcher** and **bowl** (on worktop), Geraldine Pinault





MAIN BATHROOM

'My goal was to create a majestic space with a real wow factor,' explains Sarah. 'I really fell for this pink onyx and as it's translucent, I chose to backlight it for the sink unit.'

Taps, Gessi. **Signature Object 6 side table** by Daniel Berlin, Galerie Maria Wettergren. **Travertine** and pink **onyx**, Marbrerie de l'Emperador



MAIN BEDROOM

'I wanted to design a bedhead that hugs the mattress so you really feel like you're in a cocoon,' explains Sarah.

Wall plaster, Signature Murale. **Alabaster ceiling lights**; **marble bedside table**; **rug**, all Sarah Dray. **Bedhead and curtain in** fabrics by Dedar. **Nocta_03 stoneware lamp** by Denis Castaing, Aurélien Gendras. **Bed linen**, Lissoy





CHILD'S BEDROOM

'This room belongs to the oldest daughter, who asked me to create a decor that would be a good background for her Instagram photos,' recalls Sarah. 'I chose to design a wavy mirror that is a homage to Italian designer Ettore Sottsass's iconic Ultrafragola model.'

Vanity in oak and Patagonia granite; **Wave mirror**, both Sarah Dray. **Ceramic floor tiles**, Bains & Déco. **Bed linen**, Lissoy