







odolphe Parente has very clear ideas of what constitutes elegance. "It's a skilful mix of grace, attitude and irreverence,

which is not linked to the notion of good taste," says the French interior designer. In his own work, he always likes to shake things up a little. "I try to incorporate something a little different, an unusual element that provokes a dialogue," he continues. For the 2017 *AD Intérieurs* showhouse in Paris, he imagined a dry cleaners with walls made from metal cladding more usually found on construction sites. His dream kitchen, meanwhile, has a tarmac floor.

Still, not all of his projects are quite so radical. This 309 sq/m apartment, which acts as a pied-à-terre for a French couple based in Singapore, is a perfect case in point. It is located in a building dating from 1910 in what is known as the *Triangle d'Or* (or "Golden Triangle"), a highly sought-after part of Paris's 8th arrondissement, bordered by the three stylish avenues — Montaigne, George V and the Champs-Elysées. The space previously housed the offices of a law firm, who had fitted it out with a series of large rooms and bright-red walls.

Parente completely reworked the layout, placing a luxurious master suite at its heart and a family room and two other bedrooms at the rear, accessed via a circular antechamber. "We realised we needed a breathing space and opted for a round form to make it more dynamic and enveloping," he states. Although he removed a number of existing fireplaces, he was keen to retain other architectural details, such as the cornice mouldings and delicately sculpted window and door frames. He also commissioned the Parisbased decorative artist Florence Girette to paint a cloudy sky on the vertiginous double-height ceiling in the sitting room.



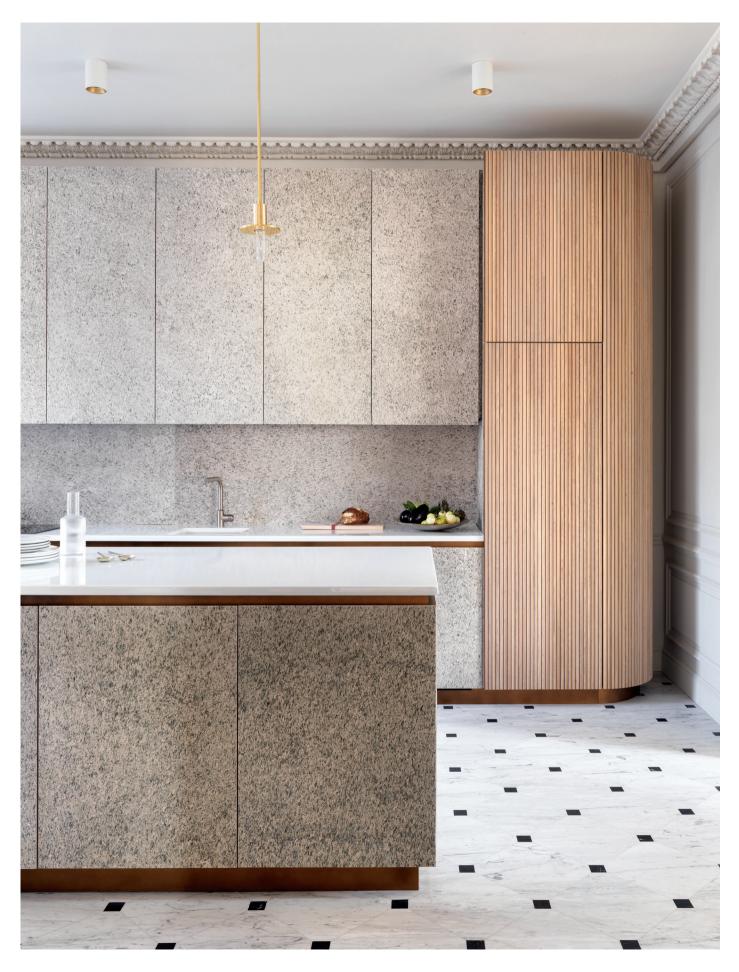
The rest of Parente's intervention is typical of his work, which is characterised by a rigorous approach. "I like precision and a certain graphic quality to my rooms," he says. He cites design maestros such as Carlo Scarpa, Pierre Chareau and Peter Zumthor amongst his influences, and claims that the genesis of his style can also be traced back to his childhood. He was born in 1980 in Besançon, a city in the east of France that is overlooked by a fortified citadel designed by Vauban in the 17th century. "The style of its architecture has stuck with me," he adds. After graduation, he trained in the offices of the legendary decorator Andrée Putman for five years before setting up his own eponymous firm in 2010.



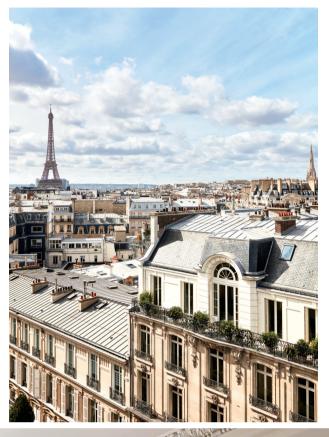














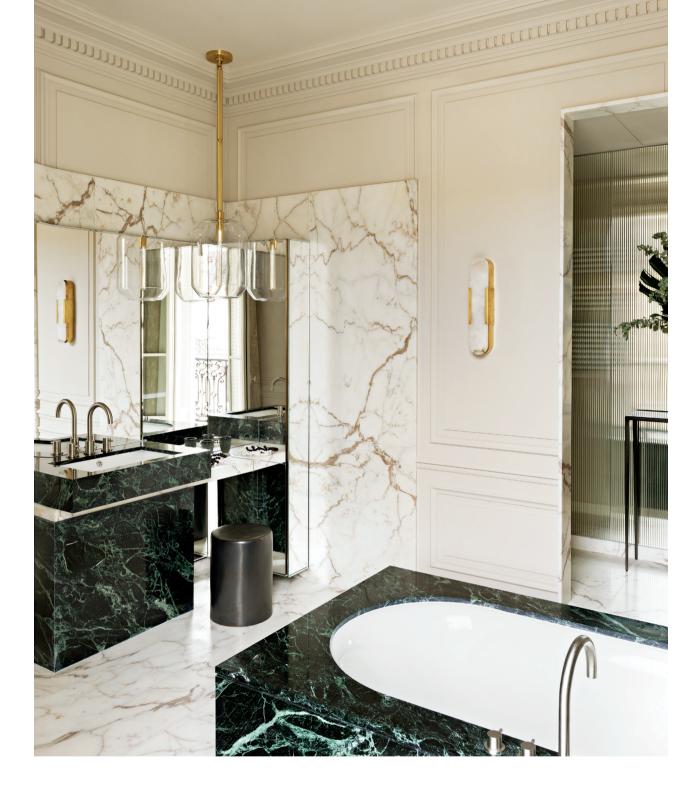
"The *style* of my intervention is quite *austere* and not particularly French. It's closer to *1930s Italy*"

Since then, his projects have included residences in Paris and Monaco, a boutique for shoe designer Christian Louboutin in Milan and a chic furniture collection for Pouenat.

His goal here was to update the interior by adding a twist to the traditional Parisian framework. "The style of my intervention is quite austere and not particularly French," he notes. "It's closer to 1930s Italy and the Villa Necchi." To anchor the sitting room, he imagined a voluminous fireplace made from tiles and geometrically arranged blocks of marble. "I wanted something solid that would contrast with the finesse of the sculpted wood panelling," he explains. A certain order was given to both the dining room and study, where the walls are respectively accentuated with vertical lines and an oversized trellis pattern.







And in Parente's world, even colour is applied for its architectural qualities. "I don't use it in a decorative fashion," he explains. A perfect example is the family room, whose deep terracotta walls and ceiling more or less embrace the visitor.

His favourite rooms to design in any interior are the bathroom and kitchen, and both here are pure tours de force. The former in the master suite features a tub clad in green granite at its centre and an ingenious interplay of angular forms. The kitchen, meanwhile, is a master class in materiality. The breakfast nook is enveloped with ribbed-oak walls, the units are faced with a striking stone veneer and the countertops are in enamelled lava. Parente chose the latter partly

because it reminded him of his grandmother's kitchen. "It's also really hygienic and very durable" he adds. "Plus, it has a surface that's not completely flat. So, it creates wonderfully blurred reflections."

While Parente's architectural approach may be particularly structured and precise, the way he integrates art and furnishings in to his projects tends to appear rather more arbitrary. He likes to create interesting juxtapositions between objects and will often not centre paintings on a wall. "It's important to have things that work well together and others that don't," he states. "There's nothing more unbearable than a space where everything matches too perfectly. You always need to give a room a touch of spirit."

