

# VOGUE

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NEW WAVE

LUXURY WATCHES AND JEWELLERY SPECIAL *PLUS* KITCHEN AND BATHROOM EDIT

# RHYTHM

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# OF

For a young Parisian family, RODOLPHE PARENTE authors interiors that convey EMOTION, *frame experience* and eschew imitation by interpreting their home's ART DECO architectural lineage through a *contemporary lens*.

# LIFE

*Opposite page* in the entrance of this Paris home, **wall panels** in medal brass metal; **totem** by Olivier Millagou from Galerie Sultana; **floor** in beige stone and Verde Alpi marble. *Details, last pages.*







*These pages* in the living room, custom **sofa** in bleached oak and walnut, custom **coffee table** in beige stone and straw marquetry and custom **fireplace** in travertine, all by Rodolphe Parente; 1920s **armchairs** by Michel Dufet from Galerie Jacques Lacoste; **side table** by Josef Hoffmann from Galerie Romain Morandi; **candelabra** and **plate** (on coffee table) from Galerie Paradis; **vase** by Jaime Hayon from Galerie Kreo; **totem** by Olivier Millagou from Galerie Sultana; 1960s **wall lights** by Max Ingrand from Giustini / Stagetti.















*This page* in the dining room, custom travertine table by Rodolphe Parente; chairs by Carlo de Carli; ceramic vessel by Kristin McKirdy from Jousse Entreprise; vase by Pol Chambost from Thomas Fritsch Artrium; custom rug; wall sconces by Max Ingrand from Galerie Jacques Lacoste; pendant light by Gino Sarfatti for Astep, enquiries to Mobilia. *Opposite page* in the kitchen, benchtop, splashback and cabinets in Paonazzo marble; sculpture by Olivier Millagou from Galerie Sultana.





ince *Vogue Living* last spoke with Rodolphe Parente one year ago, the interior architect and designer has been meditating on how his practice holds space for what is essential but goes unseen — when architecture “steps back and becomes a frame for a feeling, rather than a statement of style”.

Rigorously trained and unteachably intuitive, Parente continues to evolve his contemporary aesthetic while remaining conscious of and relevant to the quotidian requirements of real families. Though his projects push boundaries, they are legitimate proposals for everyday life, the most recent being the 1930s home of a Parisian couple with three children, whom he describes as “intelligent, open-minded, and deeply attentive to detail and atmosphere”.

The home comprises two apartments on separate floors of an Art Deco building on Avenue Henri-Martin, which shares the same name as the Post-Impressionist painter Henri-Jean Guillaume Martin. Like Parente, he was of French and Italian heritage, and coincidentally, both designer and artist attended fine arts schools, found their professional footing in Paris, and focused radical ideas and deliberate techniques into light-infused landscapes that capture the rhythms of life.

The owners had seen one of Parente’s interior projects — an apartment in the Paris Invalides district — and responded to the way his work conveys emotion without enforcing a fixed *mise en scène*. “They weren’t looking for staging, they were looking for authorship,” repeats Parente of his clients’ request. “They wanted a space that reflected them, intimate but open, refined but never pretentious. A place that lives, breathes and ages well.” For the designer, that meant reconnecting the property’s dissonant parts and inventing a new aesthetic *lingua franca*, “where the decorator fades away and only the experience remains”.

Not one to be weighed down by nostalgia, Parente is of the opinion that a building’s history is “raw material, and not an end to itself”. For this reason, he says, “I don’t restore, I compose... I bend history, extend it, absorb it into something else to create a new atmosphere.” Though Parente admired their generous proportions and “elegant light”, the two apartments were stylistically predictable. In response, he has designed interiors true to the home’s Parisian architectural lineage but interpreted through a contemporary lens.

Parente revised the layout, removed unnecessary corridors and prised a new route through. A staircase, built by naval craftsmen using bentwood techniques with the integrity of haute couture, unwinds like a wooden ribbon through the home’s core, connecting the entrance, office and communal areas on the lower level with the bedrooms, bathrooms, dressing room and library above. Parente points out that the staircase, “the heart of the project”, is both a functional and emotional feature — “it doesn’t impose; it guides”.

The staircase’s tender spiral is one of many instances in which Parente has introduced curves into what was an orthogonal structure. Spatial transitions are softer now, rooms are choreographed to reveal themselves at a slower pace. “The space should be discovered, not consumed,” the designer declares. Of the original elements that remain intact, the windows (which fell under heritage protection) might be the most important. Through them, layers of light enter, lapping against oak floors and casting shadows across surfaces in a subtle pearlescent mineral plaster. In the kitchen, it brings out the golden veins of a Paonazzo marble table and surrounding cabinets; in the dressing room and office it illuminates the texture of fabric-panelled joinery. As Parente identifies, “Light is the protagonist of every space.”

A “radical”, yet no less luxurious palette of dark-stained wood, oxidised brass and cracked lacquer reflects Parente’s effort to link the two levels via a “sensual material language”. He favours materials and finishes that are timeless “but never static”, then presents them in ways that break away from traditional applications. This approach calls to mind a comment made during discussion about how ambiguous materials can be; their potential to shift perception, subvert expectation, and “bring together the raw and the refined in unexpected ways”.

Parente, who has his own furniture collection, begins designing custom pieces for an interiors project quite early on in the process, and by way of explaining why, he says: “I see furniture as punctuation in the spatial narrative. A single piece can define the axis of a room, its rhythm, its breath.” This plays out in the living room, where the eye moves straight toward a sofa in bleached oak. Designed by Parente, it faces an asymmetric coffee table, a bespoke piece in beige stone and straw marquetry, and an original fireplace he reimagined in travertine.

Another of Parente’s designs presides in the dressing room. Garbed in glossy lacquered wood, the dressing unit, a composite of curved geometries, confirms just how compatible furniture and fashion are. In the downstairs office, a custom desk handsome in leather and astrakhan wood has the stoicism required to support the weight of dense works of literature.

Art and design sourced from studios and galleries including Desprez Breheret and Nilufar build upon Parente’s intention to curate a “silent conversation” between objects, design elements and the building’s heritage character. The result couldn’t be further from what Parente calls ‘the total look’ — “an interior that imitates something it doesn’t truly understand; the surface without substance.” Style requires context or else it is a pastiche, he asserts. “Elegance is what’s left once everything unnecessary has been removed.” ■ [rodolpheparente.com](http://rodolpheparente.com)



*This page* in another view of the kitchen, custom  
Paonazzo marble **table**, and custom **sofa**  
upholstered in Pierre Frey fabric by Rodolphe  
Parente; **chairs** by Tobia Scarpa for Tacchini;  
**glasses** by Pierre Charpin from Cristallerie  
Saint-Louis; **candelabras** by Jean Després from  
Galerie Paradis; **wall light** by Robert Mathieu  
from Galerie Meubles et Lumières; **floor** in oak;  
**artwork** by Anne Collier.





*This page* in the living room with a view to the entrance, **ash tray** with brass stand by Max Ingrand; custom **rug** by Rodolphe Parente; marble **console** by Jean-Baptiste Fastrez from Galerie Kreo; **sculpture** by Riccardo Scarpa from Galerie Jacques Lacoste; **artwork** from Galerie Sultana. *Opposite page* in the dressing room, custom **unit** in lacquered wood by Rodolphe Parente; **joinery** with lacquered frame, brass and fabric panels; **vase** by Guido Andlovitz from Archyvio; Lipari **suspension light** from Garnier & Linker.















*These pages* in the main bedroom, custom walnut **headboard** upholstered in chenille fabric by Rodolphe Parente; De Sede DS-600 **sofa**, enquiries to Domo; **coffee table** by George Nakashima; **cushions** in Safran silk velvet from Pierre Frey; custom silk **curtains** from Prella et Cie; **floor lamp** by Ignazio Gardella from Nilufar; **ceiling lamp** by Bent Karlbj from Jackson Design; **floor** in oak. *Details, last pages.*