

eternal grace


This unashamedly feminine take on a grand old French apartment blends tradition with bold touches of colour

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cheat sheet

Who lives here? Cardiologist Aude Mignot and her cat.

Style of house: A 19th-century apartment with two bedrooms (one used as a music room) located in the historic centre of Bordeaux, France.

 The apartment had a complete makeover, but without any construction work, and was finished in three months.

LIVING ROOM Owner Aude stands at the gorgeous bow window of the raised study. Her home showcases heritage elements while also having a modern twist. The rocking chair and timber desks are family heirlooms. Picking up on the tones in the window's stained glass are the vibrant Muuto 'Rest' sofa and Acapulco chairs.



HALLWAY (above) The apartment welcomes visitors with a hallway that has classical doorway details accentuated by a light grey shade. A modern touch comes in the form of a cluster of yellow Muuto 'E27' pendant lights. The black chair was found at a flea market. **READING CORNER (above right)** At the other end of the raised bow window zone is this cosy space featuring a leather club chair from an antique shop. **LIVING ROOM (opposite)** The original parquet floor has been carefully restored to a warm finish, complementing the furniture and decorative mouldings.



Understated elegance is the first phrase that comes to mind upon arriving at the home of Aude Mignot. With a spectacular bow window, heritage mouldings and a fresh contemporary palette, her home is a testament to the art of balancing restoration and modernisation.

When Aude purchased the home, some of the character of this 19th-century apartment, in the French city of Bordeaux, had been lost by former residents. It turns out the dwelling was only waiting for expert hands in order to be revived.

Aude had been living in the apartment for a few months, contemplating her design options, when friends introduced her to the work of interior decorators Ninou Etienne and Marie Dumora, and she decided to trust them both with the project. Her brief was to highlight the traditional elements of the apartment, as well as making the whole interior lighter.

“Aude did not want anything pompous,” says Ninou. “I asked her to make a list of ‘likes’ and ‘don’t likes’ from a selection of magazine pictures. It’s a good working tool that starts a conversation and involves the client in the project.”

The sizes of the rooms were mostly preserved, although a few modifications now allow for easier movement throughout the space. This included opening the door between the living room and the music room, and removing the handrail running along the bow-window platform.

The kitchen was sourced from Ikea, and finished with stainless-steel elements and blue walls. Now a small room off the entry hall (Ninou says an open-plan kitchen would not have suited the era of the apartment), the cooking zone includes a counter that has become a favourite breakfast spot.



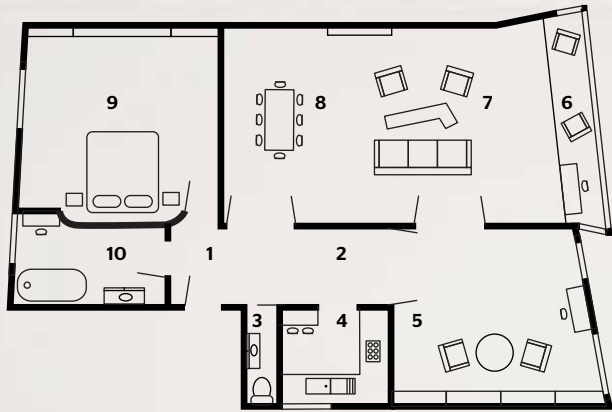
star performer

Aude’s decorators used grey for each archway to further highlight the ornate intricacy of these mouldings.



“This project was a real pleasure – I love mixing old features with contemporary ones”

NINOU ETIENNE, DECORATOR



- 1. Entry
- 2. Hallway
- 3. WC
- 4. Kitchen
- 5. Music room
- 6. Study/reading corner
- 7. Living area
- 8. Dining area
- 9. Master bedroom
- 10. Bathroom



As the apartment is a series of rooms, having slimline windows at the dine-in nook creates a sense of light, space and connection.

Another change made during the renovation was the removal of a partition wall that used to split the bathroom in two. During the refurbishment of these rooms, the parquet floor was revealed under the tiles – a nice surprise – and it was restored to its original glory.

The key element in the project was the colour choice for the interior walls. The prominence of classical features is counterbalanced by light tones, white walls and dove grey on the woodwork, and acts as a connecting thread from the hallway to the living room. In contrast, the black walls in the music room bring out the architectural elements, especially the beautiful coffered ceiling (“my favourite part of the house,” says Ninou). The kitchen and bathroom were painted in a soft range of blue-greens, from steel blue to seafoam green.

“As the project was specifically conceived for a woman, we wanted to create a very feminine atmosphere, especially in the bathroom and in the bedroom,” Ninou says. “We quite liked the Italian feeling in the woodwork of the bedroom and decided to keep it as is. We just softened their presence with an almond-green paint colour and a floral wallpaper.”

Contemporary furniture and vintage finds make for a harmonious mix of styles. Most of the pieces were jointly chosen by the owner and the decorators, often sourced from the famous flea markets of Bordeaux. “We would send pictures to each other to get an opinion. Aude found the vintage sideboard in the dining room and the coffee table. I found the bedside tables and the rattan chairs,” explains Ninou. “The dialogue was easy between us. It was an emotional day when the project was finally completed. Aude gave me the best compliment when she said, ‘Now I like to be at home.’”

For more information on Ninou’s work, visit fusiond.fr.

DINING AREA (opposite) At the end of the living room is this dining corner. Aude updated the wooden chairs and table, all market finds, by painting them black and white. The Italian hanging chandelier was found at the Brocante des Quinconces, a famous antiques fair in Bordeaux. **KITCHEN (above left)** The steel-blue kitchen features cabinets and a basin from Ikea. Stainless-steel elements help to modernise the cooking zone. To compensate for its small size, the kitchen features a mix of open and concealed storage options. The breakfast nook (above) has a bespoke metal-covered counter.



great value

'Ludde' sheepskins from Ikea cosy up seating throughout the home – a bargain at \$69 each!

BATHROOM (opposite) A delicate almond green tone on the walls and charming furniture give this bathroom an old-world appeal. Subway tiles are both a chic and practical choice in the wet zone while panelling under the window brings further depth to the look. **MASTER BEDROOM (above)** The original woodwork remains and is saved from being too heavy with a bold seafoam green shade on the walls. A floral bedspread also brings in colour, as well as the 'Volière Aviary' suspension lamp by Mathieu Chailières.

paint palette

It's the colour choices that have given this French apartment its *pièce de résistance*. Soft green shades have a welcoming feel to them while the blue in the kitchen marries well with the stainless-steel appliances, drawers and kickboard.

'Clean & Protect' interior **paints** in Naturalist and Cool Store, \$59.90/4L; 'Clean & Protect Kitchen & Bathroom' **paint** in Freshness, \$60.90/4L; all British Paints, 132 525.



Muuto 'Rest' 2-seater **sofa**, \$5802, Living Edge, livingedge.com.au.



“This sofa's clean lines counter the classic bones of this home to create a contemporary kind of cool”

JOSEPH GARDNER, MARKET EDITOR

THE MAGIC 3

1



'FRC004' plaster **cornice**, \$21.60/lineal metre, Bailey Interiors, baileyinteriors.com.au.

2



Hakwood 'Colour Collection' **flooring** in Noble, \$189/sqm, Salvage Group, salvage.com.au.

3



Gloss bevel ceramic subway **tile**, \$36/sqm, Byzantine Design, byzantinedesign.com.au.

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