

This page The sofa by Greta Grossman c.1942 has been reupholstered in Jim Thompson 'Grand Rapids' fabric. 'L'oeil' coffee table by Pierre Chapo. The wooden stool/side table is by Kaspar Hamacher. Opposite page 'T22' desk by Pierre Chapo with vintage chair by Jens Risom. 1950s floor lamp by Lisa Johansson-Pape. Artwork by David Malek.



CHEVRON SHARP

Restrained natural materials laid in subtle patterns create visual calm in an apartment located on a busy Paris shopping street.

Photographs STEPHAN JULLIARD Words IAN PHILLIPS





These pages A 1920s ceramic vase from the Chahan Gallery in Paris sits on the 'L'oeil' elmwood coffee table by Pierre Chapo. Pierre Jeanneret armchairs from Galerie 54 in Paris. The small bench with books on it is 1950s American. The floor lamp is by Serge Mouille. Above the marble and steel fireplace hangs an artwork by Horst P. Horst.

The owner of this Paris apartment, Jérôme Roret, never intended to enlist the services of Belgian architect and interior designer Nicolas Schuybroek. They first met as friends and thought it better to keep it that way. "Working with someone you're close to can be risky," says Jérôme, a 30-ish French headhunter. Things turned out differently. This is their second joint project. The first was a renovation of an abandoned Brussels auto shop into a flat. Jérôme had asked Nicolas to visit it to advise him on whether to buy it or not. "Later, we went for a beer and Nicolas began to do some sketches," he says. "We realised we had the same vision."

The Paris apartment also required a complete overhaul. The space Jérôme bought measured 140 square metres, which he decided to split into two – his own 100-square-metre apartment and a smaller bedsit accessed by a separate staircase. Located on a busy street near Montparnasse, it hadn't been touched for 40 years. "It was dark and in bad shape," says Nicolas. "It was a tip," adds Jérôme. Still, he liked the neighbourhood and the contrast of the bustling street and calm rear courtyard. "When you open the bedroom window, you can't hear a thing," he says.

Nicolas could see its true potential. "There was a means of re-sculpting it to turn it into something great," he says. Now 34, he worked for Vincent Van Duysen before setting up his practice in 2011. He recently decorated a house in Antwerp for Christian Dior Makeup's creative and image director, Peter Philips, and is completing a hotel for Grupo Habita in Chicago. He cites Peter Zumthor, Luis Barragán, David Chipperfield and architect and monk Hans van der Laan as design mentors. "To all their work, there's an almost mystical dimension in the way the different spaces are connected," he says. "There are also textures and materials that make the atmosphere very calm and restful."

The designer aimed for a similar approach. He completely transformed the layout, inverting the location of the kitchen and bathroom, and creating a large living space out of what had been three small rooms. At its heart is a spectacular kitchen wrapped in wood panelling with a sculptural marble counter at its centre and a glass partition to let in natural light.

Materials were kept to a strict minimum. "I avoid using too many to maintain a sense of visual calm," Nicolas says. Carrara marble was used in the kitchen for the island and flooring, where it was laid in the same chevron pattern as the parquet in the adjacent living room. Residue pieces were cut into square tiles for the bathroom. Identical stained oak, meanwhile, was used on both wall panelling and built-in cupboards.

He favours neutral palettes and has a love for pieces created by Pierre Jeanneret for Chandigarh, as witnessed by the 'Cross' armchairs in the living room. "I love their architectural brutality and the refined patina and colours," Nicolas says. He is also a fan of Scandinavian 20th-century lighting by the likes of Paavo Tynell and Lisa Johansson-Pape, and the crafty wooden furniture of French carpenter Pierre Chapo. A contemporary touch is added by a pair of sculptural bar stools from Galerie Patrick Fourtin by Lebanese-born designer Majd Bazerji.

This may not be the last collaboration for the pair. When they separated the original space, they made sure it could also easily be linked back together. "I saw with my friends that as soon as they had one or two children, they were forced to move somewhere bigger," says Jérôme, "and I didn't want to have to do that". With his first child due shortly, he could start feeling the need for extra space very soon. Visit ns-architects.com.



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This page Dining table from the Pedestal collection by Eero Saarinen for Knoll with chairs by Charlotte Perriand. Glass dish by Anna Torfs. 'Last Night' pendant light by Damien Langlois-Meurinne for Pouenat. Artwork by Joe Reihsen. 'Captain's Mirror' from BDDW. Opposite page, clockwise from top left The bathroom vanity is marble and stained-oak. In the kitchen, panelled in stained-oak veneer, is a bar stool by Majd Bazerji bought from the Galerie Patrick Fourtin in Paris. The vintage floor lamp in the entry hall is by Gino Sarfatti. The artwork in the entry hall is a lithograph by Jean Cocteau. The photo on the office wall was taken by Nicolas Schuybroek.



This page Armchair by Ico Parisi. Moroccan M'Rirt rug from Liberty in London. 'Mori Squash' light by Rich Brilliant Willing. 'Array' bedside light from CTO Lighting. Opposite page The bathroom tiles are Carrara marble, which is also used with oak on the custom vanity. Wooden bowl by Alexandre Noll. Rudge & Co taps and fixtures.



SPEED READ

» The second collaboration between Jérôme Roret, the home owner, and Belgian architect and interior designer Nicolas Schuybroek, this project divided a 140 square metre space into two dwellings – an apartment for Jérôme and his family and a bedsit with a separate entrance. » The previously dilapidated space was completely transformed with a fluid layout that offers different possibilities to get from one point to another. » A minimal materials palette of Carrara marble, oak and other timbers created a sense of visual calm for the interiors of the apartment in a busy street near Montparnasse. » Vintage French furniture, Scandinavian lighting classics and contemporary pieces complete the look.

