

Parisian DELICACY

Tones of smooth caramel and rich chocolate derived from a palette of natural materials lend this apartment an elegantly indulgent atmosphere

Words **CLARE SARTIN** Photography **GAËLLE LE BOULICAUT**

Living room A bespoke sofa version of Sandra Benhamou's 'Dolly' armchair from her 'Ginger' collection, upholstered in 'Teddy' velvet from Pierre Frey, is joined by a pair of vintage straw lounge chairs by Charlotte Perriand. The rug is a custom design by Sandra and the coffee table is a hand-carved ebony piece by Dan Pollock, picked up from Galerie Desprez Breheret. The Japanese stool is from WA Design Gallery and the artwork on the wall is a canvas by Edgard Pillet from Galerie Alexandre Guillemain. The wall light is the 'Line L' by Gounot & Jahnke for Ozone, available at The Invisible Collection ▶



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ight in the heart of the French capital, just a short walk from the beautiful Musée Rodin, this apartment is a tranquil refuge for its art-loving owners. Situated in a traditional Haussmannian building with two quiet internal courtyards, the property seems like it has always possessed a calm air, but, until recently, this was a place of work rather than a home.

Turning it from a corporate relic into a chic abode was the challenge that greeted interior designer Sandra Benhamou. She had managed a similar transformation in her own home, so knew exactly where to begin: from scratch. She set about ripping out internal walls and the false ceiling, and was instantly gifted with a surprise discovery. Beneath its business suit, this apartment was hiding beautiful original mouldings.

'The brief from the clients was quite simple,' explains Sandra. 'They wanted something timeless, classically Parisian and peaceful.' She started by envisioning a palette of materials that combines travertine and an audacious mixture of woods. Oak, chestnut, walnut and ebony all feature in this home, from the kitchen cabinetry to the handcrafted furniture, but it is the choices of stone used in the kitchen and bathroom – selected for their flecks of caramel and chocolate brown – that sets the colour scheme for the interior.

As well as mixing grown-up shades of beige and tan, Sandra has added depth to this home by including elements of glossy lacquer and mirrors. The smart use of the latter disguises the blocked-in chimney breast that divides the living area from the kitchen. It also transforms what could appear a compact pied-à-terre into a much more grand affair.

The glamour carries through into Sandra's furniture choices. There are handcrafted pieces, such as the wooden dining table and bench by Rudolph Condon, picked up from WA Design Gallery in Paris, as well as items from her own 'Ginger' collection. The sofa is a bespoke version of her 'Dolly' armchair – she liked it so much, it's now going to be added to the range. The mood that influenced these designs is one Sandra describes as bordering on decadence. 'A kind of luxury that is both extreme and cosy.'

Those ideas are clearly at play here, but there are also previews of her upcoming new collection, which she says will, like this property, include a variety of different woods. She has been musing on her love of minimal art and the work of visionaries like Agnes Martin and Donald Judd, whose own furniture has a preoccupation with the beauty of timber.

Stalled by the pandemic, which briefly stopped all renovation work, this home is testament to the power of creating something gloriously peaceful – an elegant escape from the chaos. sandrabenhamou.com

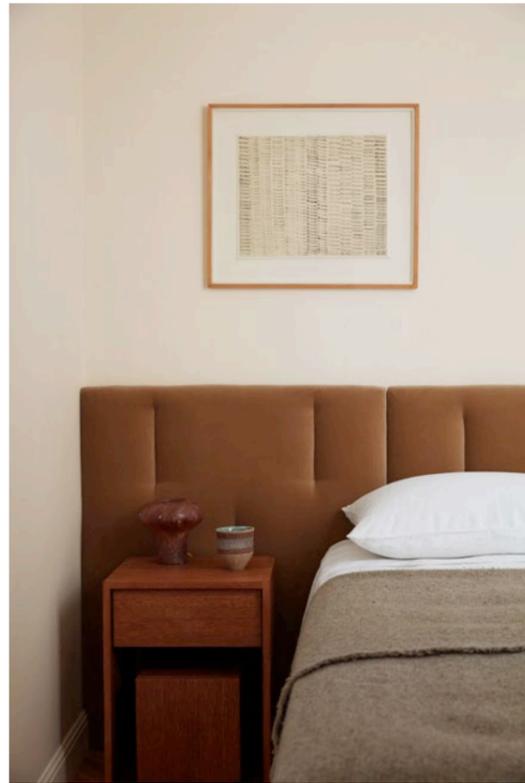
Portrait Sandra Benhamou stands beside a piece of tribal art purchased from Galerie Lucas Raton in Paris. It sits on 'Stool #13' by Guillaume Bardet, available at Galerie Kreo. More of the homeowners' collection of tribal pieces are displayed on the bespoke lacquered shelving (opposite) ▶



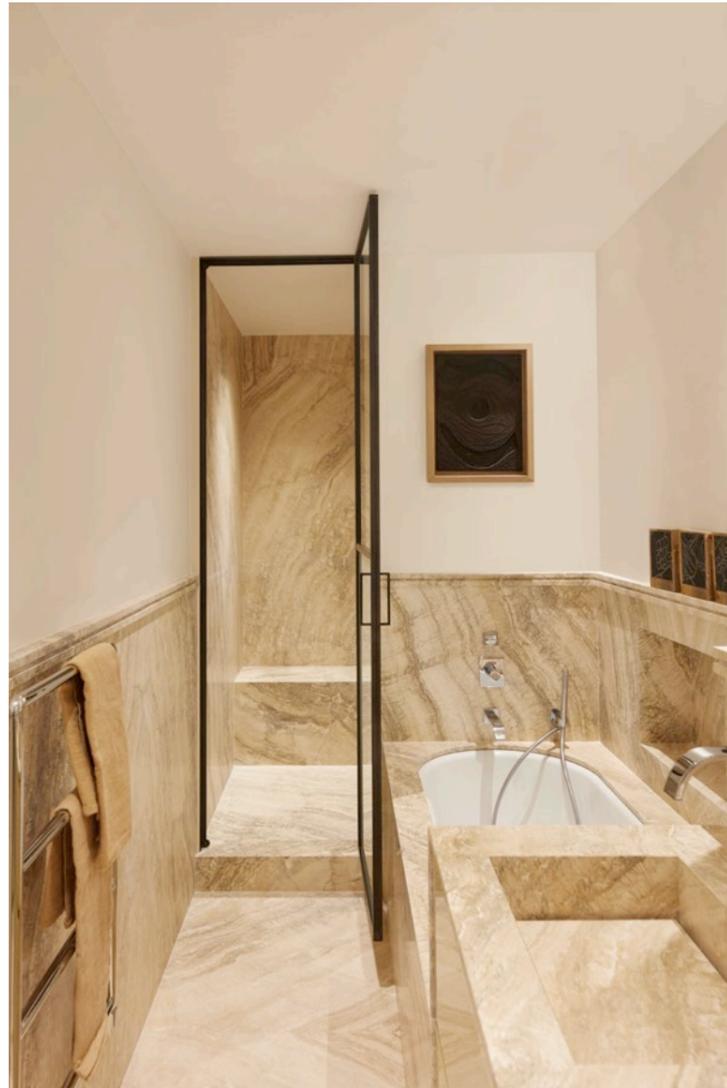
‘The clients wanted something TIMELESS, CLASSICALLY Parisian and PEACEFUL’



Dining room Crafted by American designer Rudolph Condon in the 1960s, this table and bench were purchased from WA Design Gallery in Paris. The ceramic dish is a 'Domino' design by MQuan Studio, from the same local gallery, while the *Tambour 124'* circular artwork is by Latifa Echakhch, from Galerie Kamel Mennour
Kitchen Bespoke chestnut wood cabinetry creates a soothing natural palette with the herringbone aged oak flooring and travertine splashback. The pendant light above the island is the 'I-Model' by Anour ▶



Travertine STONE
– selected for its flecks
of CARAMEL and
CHOCOLATE brown
– sets the colour scheme



Guest bedroom Sandra Benhamou designed the headboard and bedside table, while the onyx lamp is a vintage piece by Angelo Mangiarotti. The ceramic cup beside it is a 1990s design by Bruno Gambone, while the artwork above is a drawing by François Arnal from Galerie Alexandre Guillemin
Bathroom Clad in marble, this space is also defined by the art on the walls, which includes a piece by Edgard Pillet and a trio of wooden artworks by Sacha Hailotte
Main bedroom Designed by Pierre Cardin for Acerbis in the 1970s, this human-shaped 'Narciso' mirror keeps watch over a mirrored 'Gio' side table from Sandra Benhamou's 'Ginger' collection
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