

# Close harmony

Raw meets refined in this masterfully put together Parisian apartment

*Words / Karine Monié  
Images / Damien de Medeiros*







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The informal dining area, with its waxed concrete table and art and sculpture stacked against a mirror

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Simon has added a series of arches, emphasising the apartment's high ceilings, to the living space

Emmanuelle Simon is only 33 years old, yet her projects already reflect a deep maturity. The architect and interior designer graduated from the renowned École Camondo in Paris in 2012 before starting her professional path with big names in the field, Jean-Marie Massaud first and then Pierre Yovanovitch. But with so much talent, the French-Israeli creative was destined to launch her own studio, which she did in 2017. The same year, she won the public prize at the international festival of interior architecture Design Parade Toulon with her project La Chambre Sur L'eau ("the bedroom on the water"). Since then, and in only five years, she has worked on several public and private interiors, including the spa for the French-Japanese brand Evidens De Beauté in Paris, and has created a furniture and lighting collection. Her work calendar is teeming with projects, from developing the new concept for Vanessa Bruno's boutiques, to a hotel in Los Angeles, to private homes.

This particular apartment by Simon is located in a classic late-19th-century building in Paris' sought-after 16th arrondissement. Flanked by houses and *hôtels particuliers*, it is accessible through a charming private dead-end, which leads to a flowered courtyard. The 150 sqm apartment occupies the ground floor, which opens up to a garden area.

"The design brief [was to] create a haven of peace in the middle of Paris, a serene and warm

space with free flowing [energy] and a sense of harmony," says Simon. As the starting point, the interior architect and designer couldn't help but notice the way that the spaces were organised and how they didn't correspond to what the homeowners – a couple with three young children – wanted. With her team, she had to fully restructure the apartment to give it a new dimension.

The main living area forms the heart of this dwelling. Characterised by a series of arches, as if it were the inner courtyard of a cloister, the space is bright and airy. "The beautiful high ceilings allowed us to work vertically, with arches and big doors," says Simon. The new design has created several nooks, connected to one another while having different functions and featuring a mix of furniture, lighting and artworks from several periods.

In the understated kitchen, 1960s timber stools combine with ceramics by Quentin Marais and Benoit Audureau, terracotta pottery by Maisons de Vacances and a painting by French contemporary artist Hermentaire. For a space dedicated to family dining, backed with a large arched mirror, Simon has upholstered a made-to-measure bench with Bruder fabric, placing it with a table in waxed concrete surrounded by Simon's own-design Baba chairs, hanging a brass and rattan from Maisonjaune Studio above. A 1980s ceramic sculpture by Pierre Martinon sits in the niche created by the





Facing page  
A vintage Florian Schultz Onos brass pendant hangs above a monumental travertine table in the dining area

Above  
Simon's Nomad sofa and Baba cushion have been used in the living room, their soft curves creating a sense of welcome



**“We chose natural colours, focusing on beige, sand and white, to reflect a calming and cosy atmosphere, in harmony with the wood”**

recessed arch, and a towering floral arrangement by Sasha de Bohême adjacent to the table brings nature inside.

To keep everything coherent, everything in the apartment sticks to the same warm neutral palette. “We chose natural colours, focusing on beige, sand and white, to reflect a calming and cosy atmosphere, in harmony with the wood,” says Simon. In addition to the brushed solid oak used, there is stone, travertine and natural fibres, among others. “We wanted to create an elegant, sober and relaxing ambience,” continues Simon. “This was achieved through the architectural work and the creation of round-shaped furniture.”

The living room is an ode to the interior architect’s love for symmetry. The raw character of materials blends with the pure lines, soft colours and the warm textures of the furniture and accessories, sculpting a serene atmosphere influenced by the *wabi-sabi* philosophy that Simon particularly reveres, which centres on finding beauty in imperfection. The Japanese influence is obvious in the custom-designed bookshelf in oak with woven panels, which cleverly hide a cloakroom through a secret door, and Simon’s Raku wall lights, made using its namesake Japanese glazing method. Further objects from her own collections feature strongly here, including plaster ceiling lamps, the oak-framed Nomad sofa, doughnut-shaped Baba cushion and plaster Cone X floor lamp.

Art and design pieces sourced from galleries, such as a sculpture in ceramic by Michel Lanos from Galerie Aurélien Gendras, coffee tables from Seltz, as well as a brass floor lamp by Jacques Grange for Yves Saint Laurent, a ceramic by Georges Jouve and Pacha lounge chairs by Pierre Paulin – all from Galerie Desprez Breheret – enrich the poetic visual story Simon tells. “It is a serene ‘temple’ in the heart of Paris, where precious details bring sophistication and originality,” she says.

In the formal dining area, glimpsed through the living space via the tall arched openings, Simon also designed the large travertine table, placing it with 1950s Thonet chairs and a metal ceiling fixture from 1960 by Florian Schulz. A painting by Hermentaire hangs on the wall.

The delicate simplicity that pervades the whole apartment continues in the master bedroom where another of Simon’s Baba chairs sits next to a wood stool by Christian Liaigre. Carved sculptures by Jean Touret sit behind the bed, while a simple chair made while Touret was working with the craft collective Ateliers de Marolles has been placed in dialogue close by.

Subtly yet undeniably, French chic finds a new dimension here – one that revisits the concept of refinement with a fresh eye and a younger twist that Simon masters like no one else. For the interior architect and designer, less than a decade into her career, the future looks bright.

Facing page  
The kitchen,  
where formal  
straight lines are  
favoured over  
the soft curves  
seen elsewhere







Above  
The monolithic vanity unit gives the bathroom a sculptural quality, with a simple palette of materials



Above  
In the master bedroom, Jean Touret sculptures line the niche above the bed; the primitive chair is also by Touret