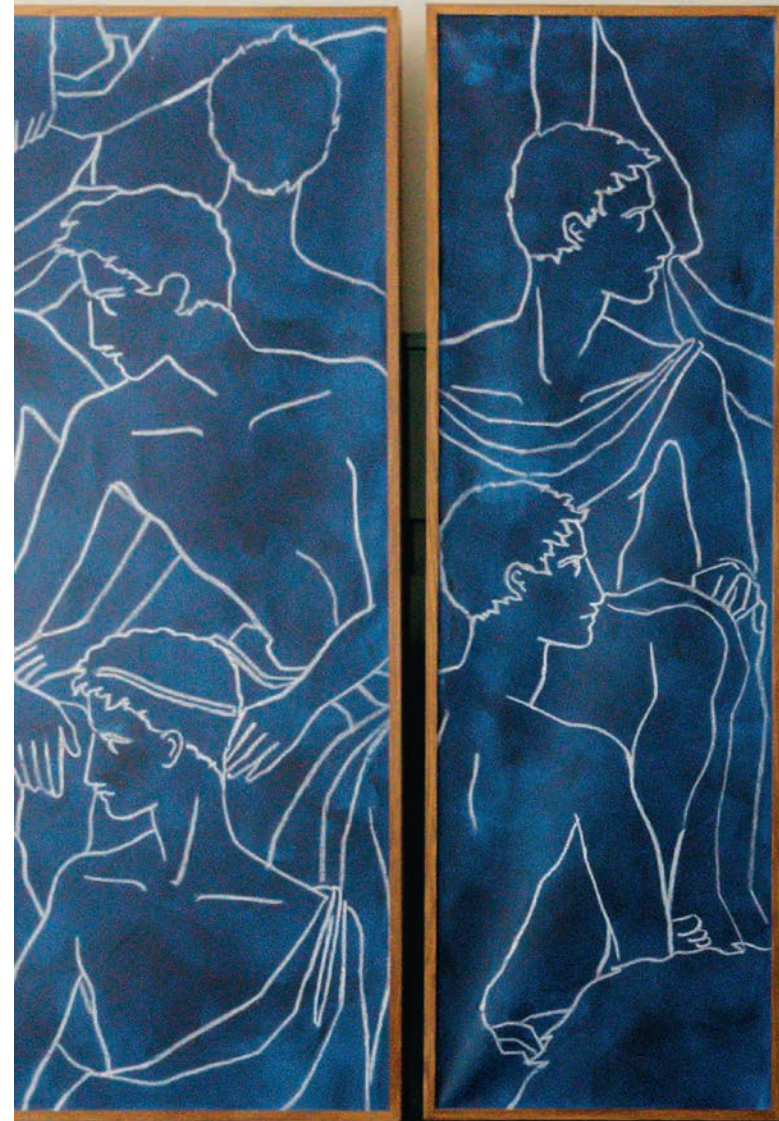


Hide & SEEK

A PARIS home originally designed by Gustave Eiffel – of the city's famed landmark tower – receives a smart POLISH at the hands of Italian interiors maestro Fabrizio Casiraghi.

THESE PAGES in the kitchen and dining area of this Paris home, bespoke lacquered wall panelling and ceramic wall sconce; vintage mirror and brass planter; Akari Light Sculpture pendant light by Isamu Noguchi for Vitra, enquiries to Living Edge; paintings by H Craig Hanna; Fijian Gugu club from Galerie Flak. Details, last pages.

By Freya Herring
Photographed by Cerruti & Draime



THIS PAGE in the living room, bespoke sofa in upholstered Pierre Frey velvet, enquiries to Milgate; Balthus lamp by Astier de Villatte; vintage plaster vase; vintage English revolving cabinet; bespoke lacquered panel room divider; triptych by Roberto Ruspoli. **OPPOSITE PAGE** interior designer Fabrizio Casiraghi in the kitchen and dining area.



THESE PAGES in another view of the kitchen and dining area, bespoke walnut dining table designed by Fabrizio Casiraghi; mid-20th-century dining chairs; pair of vintage glass vases; zinc benchtop; flooring in travertine and Verde Alpi marble.





THIS PAGE in the main bedroom, 1940s French side cabinet; Czech Functionalism lamp by Frantisek Anyz; raffia wallcovering from CMO Paris; wall sculpture by Curtis Jere.

Attempting to refit an apartment created by one of the most celebrated names in design history might deter some. Not Fabrizio Casiraghi. An 130-square-metre third-floor apartment on rue Martel in Paris's 10th arrondissement has been completely overhauled by the rising star designer. Who designed the building originally, you ask? Gustave Eiffel — yes, that Eiffel. Rather big shoes then.

"It's in one of the few buildings in Paris designed by Eiffel," says Casiraghi. He admits that while one might assume the building was typically Parisian in style, in fact the opposite is true. "It's very unusual for Paris because Eiffel's style is very industrial, which is different from all the classic buildings here. So when you come inside, it looks more like a loft in SoHo, New York. But we didn't want to create a typical American loft — that's exactly what we wanted to avoid."

The client is an actor's agent: an important — and busy — one. "He wanted something very masculine, something that is Parisian but not typically Parisian, something international," says Casiraghi. "Because he has a huge job and travels a lot, when he comes home he wants a cosy space." The pair decided to look across the Channel for inspiration. "We agreed on the definition of a cigar room and a little bit of an English gentlemen's club, so that's why we have the lacquered wooden panels all around the living area and dine-in kitchen to give that feeling."

It took about a year to renovate the space and conjure that sense of intimacy and welcome. "Six months of drawing, six months of work," says the designer. The Italian creative likes to mix vintage furniture with new, as well as incorporate bespoke designs. "Sofas are usually designed by us, kitchens are always designed by us, and a few pieces of furniture — like consoles — can be designed by us," Casiraghi says. So in the living space, the sofa, upholstered in Pierre Frey corduroy — "he asked me for something very masculine, so I used the same fabric as men's pants" — faces off against a pair of vintage Art Deco armchairs, a reflective Willy Rizzo coffee table skewered between them, the scene canopied by an oversize Isamu Noguchi globe lantern. Open to the dine-in kitchen, pre-loved dining chairs encircle a glossy walnut table designed by Casiraghi. "We reupholstered the dining chairs to make them very comfortable," he says. "You can sit for hours at the table talking and eating."

"We agreed on the definition of a cigar room and a little bit of an English gentlemen's club"

FABRIZIO CASIRAGHI

Which is exactly the point because although the kitchen may look ultra pared-back, the homeowner loves to host. He also hates mess, so all the ugly kitchen paraphernalia is cleverly tucked away. "In this house, it's all behind the wooden panels — everything is hidden," says Casiraghi. "There's a cupboard with all the dishes and glasses, the big fridge is behind another door. It's bigger than you can see." The door to the main bedroom is concealed by the glossy green lacquered panels, and in the living room, the TV — an essential item for an agent — is hidden behind them, too.

Alongside all that panelling, the apartment features wall-to-wall windows facing both east and west, flooding the apartment with morning and evening light. Between these hard surfaces, enhancing the soft light of dawn and dusk, walls in the two bedrooms are dressed rather than left bare. "We used straw wallpaper on the bedroom walls," says Casiraghi. "It's like a cabana — very natural and unexpected for Paris where you expect to find white walls with mouldings, rather than a flat wall covered in straw." He elected to use the same material, painted white, in the living area to dress the ceiling, "to give a bit of texture above the lacquered wood — we wanted to give a little bit of grain to this part of the room".

Spurning Italy's feted marble, Casiraghi instead opted to indulge his passion for ceramic in the bathrooms. "I am a huge fan of ceramic tiles," he says. "While I love marble, sometimes when bathrooms are completely covered in marble it is for me a little bit pretentious or ostentatious. I prefer more effortless chic, and with ceramic it's easy to achieve this." Using tiles sourced from Piedmont's Ceramica Vogue, the checkerboard-like design contrasts with traditional fittings, walnut Art Deco footrest poufs and mid-century wall sconces by Swede Hans-Agne Jakobsson. "When there is just ceramic, no marble, you have to find the right design by playing with pattern and colour," says Casiraghi. "It then becomes very precious, even if the material itself is not."

It is an approachable sort of elegance, then, rather than flamboyance, underpinning this apartment's aesthetic. "The most important thing for me is that a client feels comfortable when they enter somewhere I design," Casiraghi explains. "I don't want them to feel like they are in a showroom, or in an over-designed place. I love spaces where people can just feel well, where they can lay on the sofa. And that was the feeling that we had when we finished this apartment — everybody just wanted to sit on the couch and drink a glass of wine." [VL *fabriziocasiraghi.com*](http://VL.fabriziocasiraghi.com)

THESE PAGES in another view of the living area, vintage Art Deco armchair; coffee table by Willy Rizzo; bespoke lacquered bookcase; natural jute braided rug from Jules et Jim.



THIS PAGE in another view of the main bedroom, curtains in Pierre Frey Santorin sheer fabric, enquiries to Milgate; walk-in robe in walnut and grisaille wallpaper. **OPPOSITE PAGE** in the bathroom, Chelsea basins from Imperial; bespoke oval mirrors with ceramic frames; mid-century wall sconces by Hans-Agne Jakobsson; Vogue System ceramic wall tiles from Ceramica Vogue, enquiries to Classic Ceramics. *Details, last pages.*

