



Inspired by

Louis Henri

*'We asked for an apartment in Paris
and you've given us a palace in Paris'*

Text ELEANOR BÜSING | Photographs RICHARD WAITE





The latest project of London-based interiors firm Louis Henri is a breathtaking apartment located in one of Paris' most desirable neighbourhoods. Located on the fashionable Avenue Montaigne, this generously proportioned lateral apartment has been extensively remodeled to exacting standards.

The private client is an international, multi-generational family who wanted a home away from home, a sanctuary within the City of Lights. They requested a glamorous interior that drew inspiration from traditional French style, but melded with modern elegance and high-tech performance and security.

It was of particular importance for the family to have separate, defined entertaining areas and personal spaces. The four generous reception rooms now serve the former purpose, while the four ensuite bedrooms are the epitome of comfort and relaxation.

The clients asked that the focus of the project be to create a completely bespoke and unique interior, which was reflected in the project cost. Rather than being constrained by timelines and budgets, the team at Louis Henri was given free reign to use the best possible materials and craftsmen to create this high-spec home.

'We wanted something that felt location-specific,' Louis Henri Bührmann says. 'The clients are international business people who love Paris and do business in France' ►



‘I did about 170 trips to Paris, staying in a different hotel almost every time. If you want a Moroccan look, you can’t just look in a book – you have to go to Morocco to live it.’

Louis started from scratch with this project, changing virtually every room in the apartment to create a fresh layout which feels both spacious and intimate. The space was stripped back to the bones before being rebuilt using the finest finishes. The completed space is an inspiring blend of traditional French elegance and contemporary style.

The vast amount of marble in the scheme is entirely hand-polished, with some bathrooms taking over two months to install due to the exquisite detail. The guest cloakroom even features a solid, aluminium-framed marble door that blends seamlessly with the wall.

‘The execution from the marble workers was more than I could have dreamed of,’ says Louis. ‘It took them about four months to install all the marble.’

Styling the space took just as much attention and time. The breakfast nook features hand-painted silk walling, while the adjoining corridor boasts a deep-etched, LED-lit glass wall which brings light into the kitchen.

Nearly everything in this apartment has been custom designed to suit the environment. Louis’ brother, a master cabinetmaker, crafted the key pieces of furniture in South Africa, including the three-tiered walnut bookcase in the sitting room, which is inlaid with *églomisé* and finished with solid walnut detailing.

‘The largest part of the project was finding the right people to do the work,’ he says. ‘Those who did the woodwork were fourth-generation carpenters. We used workshops in St Germain that have been there since Napoleon’s time.’

The bespoke lighting, which features in the principal rooms of the apartment, was also designed in-house, and created using the combined skills of artisans from Murano, London, Paris and the United States. The sitting room chandelier alone has nearly 200 components, each meticulously created to achieve a singular statement which complements the sweeping curves in the room.

Even the door handles were designed by Louis Henri, developed from a sketch and brought to life over the course of eight months by a foundry in New York. ‘Everything we found was either very classic or too Deco – nothing was quite the look we were going for’, explains Louis.

With so many family members to design for, one of Louis’ more difficult tasks was the blending of individual styles, and the seamless integration of classic French ambiance with 21st Century comfort while maintaining a cohesive style.

Especially challenging was incorporating high-end technology throughout the space. The apartment features an intuitive, custom developed program for controlling every aspect of the environment; climate, audio, lighting and security are controlled via iPods that dock discreetly behind every door.

Nowhere is the juxtaposition of new and old more apparent than in the media room, which at first glance could be a formal French library. Hidden behind its silk-covered walls are top-end speakers, and the wall of faux books, constructed of leather by a traditional ►









British company, conceals a myriad of home cinema equipment.

A particularly successful bespoke detail is the stained-glass window in the entrance hall, which acts as both a focal point and a room divider, separating the public and private areas of the apartment. In a second home, it's not always practical to have fresh flowers every day, but Louis Henri wanted visitors to the apartment to be greeted by colour and life. He envisioned a design that would create a statement in the entrance hall any day of the year, as the first thing one sees when entering the home.

In addition to the visual impact it creates, the glass wall serves a functional purpose by carving out an extra eating space from the large hallway, achieving space and privacy without sacrificing the amount of light in the entry. The production of this centerpiece was a feat of logistics in itself, combining the efforts of skilled tradespeople in three different continents. In a project like this, nothing was left to chance.

'We very much control everything,' says Louis. 'I have more than a dozen files just of details, specs and samples. It was all very much tried and tested beforehand. We'll make mock-ups and 3D models of things. You can't order a £20k chandelier and find it doesn't look right. It needs to be perfect.'

'I love detail,' says Henri. 'The life is in the detail.' 'Having worked with so many dedicated craftsmen on this project, I'm more certain than ever that quality will never go out of style.' [B]



Louis Henri Bührmann

Penthouse 4, No. 5 Havelock Terrace, London, SW8 4AS

T: +44 (0)20 7622 8343 | www.louishenri.com

