

ELLE DECORATION N°354 MARCH 2022

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NEW INTERIORS FROM
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BATHROOMS PACKED WITH
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DECORATOR INDEX

CHARLES ZANA

Known for classicism with a modern twist, the Parisian interior designer unveils his elegant furniture collection



The Cheyne Gardens apartment designed by Charles Zana

Who is he? A veteran of 30 years' standing on the Parisian interior-design scene, Charles Zana studied architecture at the prestigious École des Beaux-Arts, a training that reveals itself in the classical lines of his spaces. He discovered interior design while living in New York after graduating, but believes his love of the discipline goes back to his childhood. 'As far back as I can remember, I always wanted to study architecture,' he says. 'It came from my father, who collected art and loved furniture. We had a very modern house in the 1970s.' Already the author of design projects around the globe, as well as a glossy coffee-table book, *Charles Zana: The Art of Interiors* (Rizzoli; £50), Zana is now expanding his world with the launch of his own homes collection. Charles Zana Mobilier consists of sculptural furniture and collectible objects 'of exceptional craftsmanship', and is produced in collaboration with the finest French artisans.

What's his style? Interiors are characterised by clean lines, subtle colours and streamlined forms, reflecting Zana's preferred influences: fine art and 1930s design. He cites the natural materials of Jean-Michel Frank and the sensuality of Gio Ponti as inspirations, as well as Italian masters such as Andrea Branzi and Enzo Mari. Although Zana's work is classical and restrained, he uses his love of art to imbue interiors with life and emotion. 'As a trained architect and an art lover, I am guided by three fundamental principles: proportion, elegance and comfort,' he explains.



What are his recent projects? Zana has designed a new Goyard boutique in Dallas, Texas (he has been responsible for the luxury brand's store interiors for years) and a home in the heart of Saint-Germain-des-Prés, Paris. 'It had been altered a lot over time, so we restructured it to create a new sense of flow throughout, with a stairwell that links all three levels,' says the designer, who also created all the furniture in the house. In complete contrast, a recent apartment project in London's Cheyne Gardens was inspired by the American Shaker movement, with pine flooring and panelled walls elevated by details in travertine, linen and bronze.

What is Zana currently working on? His new furniture line is his biggest current project. Launched last October with an exhibition in an 18th-century Paris townhouse, it includes pieces in refined materials such as suede, woven leather, cedarwood and oak, as well as bronze lighting inspired by Giorgio Morandi's still-life paintings. Zana describes the collection, realised in a subtle palette of neutrals, pale greens and black, as a quest to create timeless design 'I'm seeking

a balance between purity of forms, simplicity of volumes and functionality.' Coming next is a new bakery concept for French patisserie Yann Couvreur.

He says: 'I love harmony, and always try to relate the materials, colours and patterns in my projects. But I also love contrasts, such as raw materials in luxurious spaces.' zana.fr

From top A space decorated with pieces from Charles Zana Mobilier's first collection, including a 'Minos' floor lamp and 'Teddy' headboard in honey-hued velvet; the bright living room in the Zana-designed Kimpton St Honoré Hotel, Paris; Zana's Visitation Project in Paris; the designer's light and spacious Raspail Apartment, also in the French capital



**'I HAVE WORKED ON
A LOT OF HISTORIC
BUILDINGS, BUT I DON'T
LIKE PASTICHE OR KITSCH'**



EXPERT ADVICE

Charles Zana's tips on creating refined interiors

1 Always choose colours for a project in situ, so you can work with the light and the views. Greys don't look the same in London as they do in Provence! Painting the walls and ceilings in the same colour can create a total atmosphere – especially in period buildings with mouldings and cornices.

2 You need to understand a building in its historical context. I've worked on a lot of projects in historic buildings, but I don't like pastiche or kitsch. I prefer 'light' renovations that reveal the passage of time and leave room for contemporary interventions.

3 Favour simple, monolithic pieces of furniture in natural materials. My palette of favourite finishes includes travertine, which carries the history of the world within it, and tinted Lebanese cedarwood. Contrasting these raw materials with curved lines produces elegant results that are aesthetically timeless.

4 With art, you should collect for the love of the objects, not for the display. This way, the works will find their place naturally in your home. I like genuine collections with a strong vision, rather than a little bit of everything.



THE LITTLE BLACK BOOK

Favouring the work of trusted artisans, Charles Zana's design contacts reach from Paris across the Channel to the UK

RUGS

Galerie Diurne in Paris makes the most beautiful hand-knotted rugs that are woven in Nepal. It's tradition and quality in the extreme. There are contemporary designs inspired by landscapes and decorative arts as well as classical patterns. diurne.com

VINTAGE DESIGN

Paris gallery Jousse Entreprise is known for presenting the best of 1950s French design. Founder Philippe Jousse can see the beauty of an object before others do.

He introduced me to the ceramicist André Borderie, whose work is rich in both texture and colour.

jousse-entreprise.com

FABRICS

Holland & Sherry has the best British fabrics, including herringbone, houndstooth, stripes and cashmere. I love their boiled wool materials in autumnal colours.

hollandandsherry.com

PAINTS

Many of Little Greene's shades are developed from historical research, and there's a story behind each one. For a Victorian apartment in Marylebone I've been working on, I've chosen warm greys in an ultra-matt finish for the walls and ceilings.

littlegreene.com