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**A European couple assign  
Italian designer Achille Salvagni  
with creating a *perfetto*  
Parisian pied-à-terre**



TEXT MICHELE KEITH PHOTOGRAPHY PAOLO PETRIGNANI

***Carte blanche*** was the order of the day for the Italian designer and owner of two ateliers (one in the posh Mayfair section of London and one in Rome).

"I was told to design it exactly as I saw fit," Salvagni expresses. "Perhaps there was one ancestral painting that had to be incorporated into the scheme, but even then, we had it reframed."

Located in the chic sixth arrondissement, the historic, quintessentially French, Lutetian limestone building is small. Featuring a private entrance, garden and an underground garage reached via an elevator, it offers an impeccable blend of old and new.

Having *carte blanche* did not mean the homeowners were ignored. *Absolument pas*. Known for determining what suits a client best, Salvagni notes, "It must always be functional, but it must also permit the owners to dream. Part of my role . . . is to create an escape from the ordinary," which he did here, starting from the bottom up.

A full renovation was required, including the wiring, plumbing and audiovisual systems. "Although this always means it will be a bigger and longer job," he declares, "it allows you to get right into the heart of the process, and in many ways, it is easier because you don't need to compromise so much with what is already there." That said, he commissioned new millwork, flooring, walls and ceilings "to give ourselves the perfect canvas to dress."

What the couple wanted was a refined city apartment with a soft, muted palette; sunlight pouring into the rooms and a nod to the Art Deco period they are partial to. The Paris location provided Salvagni with plenty of inspiration to orchestrate such a composition, pointing out the French "sensibilities" as he terms them, that he employed: Christian Dior's delicate grey

The traditional, 17th-century home is made of Lutetian limestone and roofed with slate tiles and lead. Juxtaposing the living area's curves, the straight lines in the dining room include those of the chairs found at a Paris flea market and the brushed oak table by Salvagni. Framed Auguste Bouchet academic studies, male nude, c.1872-1874. Demarcating living from dining space are the 1950s Stilnovo lamp with painted aluminum shades and an ottoman upholstered with an ethically sourced zebra hide. Windows are dressed in Dedar velvet.













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furnishings that combine organic forms with precious materials as was done by Jean Royère, and the mirrored glass frequently found in traditional French homes.

At the same time, the designer livened things up. His solution? Juxtaposing styles and bringing them together in contemporary ways – Louis XVI demi-lune tables, custom silk rugs from Tibet as well as numerous flea-market finds which greet one at every turn.

Last, Salvagni added an “Italian stamp” with such items as a vintage Stilnovo lamp in the living room, a 1930s Murano chandelier in the master bedroom and several of his own custom pieces, including a dining table, hallway cabinet and suede-upholstered bed.

According to the clients, he got it right. “We’ve worked together since,” Salvagni says with a smile. “That surely is the best reaction one could hope for.”



The master bedroom surprises with a bed niche lined in Elitis raw silk, and an Italian, 1880s commode painted with classic Hellenistic scenes in the neoclassical style. The marble-swathed guest bath introduces femininity with the carved chair found at a Paris flea market.