

HOME



PHOTOGRAPHY: MICHAEL PAUL/LIVING INSIDE.

Covetable homes from New Zealand and across the world that show how beautiful artwork and thoughtful design lift interiors to luxurious new heights.

MASTER OF *reinvention*

Belgian interior designer Caroline Legrand gave her London apartment a luxe new look in just four weeks by revamping her furniture and refocusing her art collection.

WRITER AND PHOTOGRAPHER: MICHAEL PAUL/LIVING INSIDE.

The dining room features Anish Kapoor's Blue Shadow prints, Lucien Smith's STP and a bronze ram's head dining table from the 1960s. The Charles Hollis Jones lucite-framed dining chairs were reupholstered in a white towelling fabric.







Legrand in front of a Jérôme Robbe artwork in the hallway, which was repainted white.

It is said that leopards don't change their spots, but when it comes to the homes of leading interior designers more often than not they frequently change in character and content. It's hardly controversial to state that creative people get bored easily. Their desire for change and new ideas keeps them restless and on their toes; new colour schemes and fabrics constantly challenge their preconceptions and new pieces of furniture or edgy artworks inspire the creative process.

In these days of powerful globalisation where technology and design aesthetics meet and where ever-changing fashions are constantly exerting their influences, it's not surprising that interior designers'

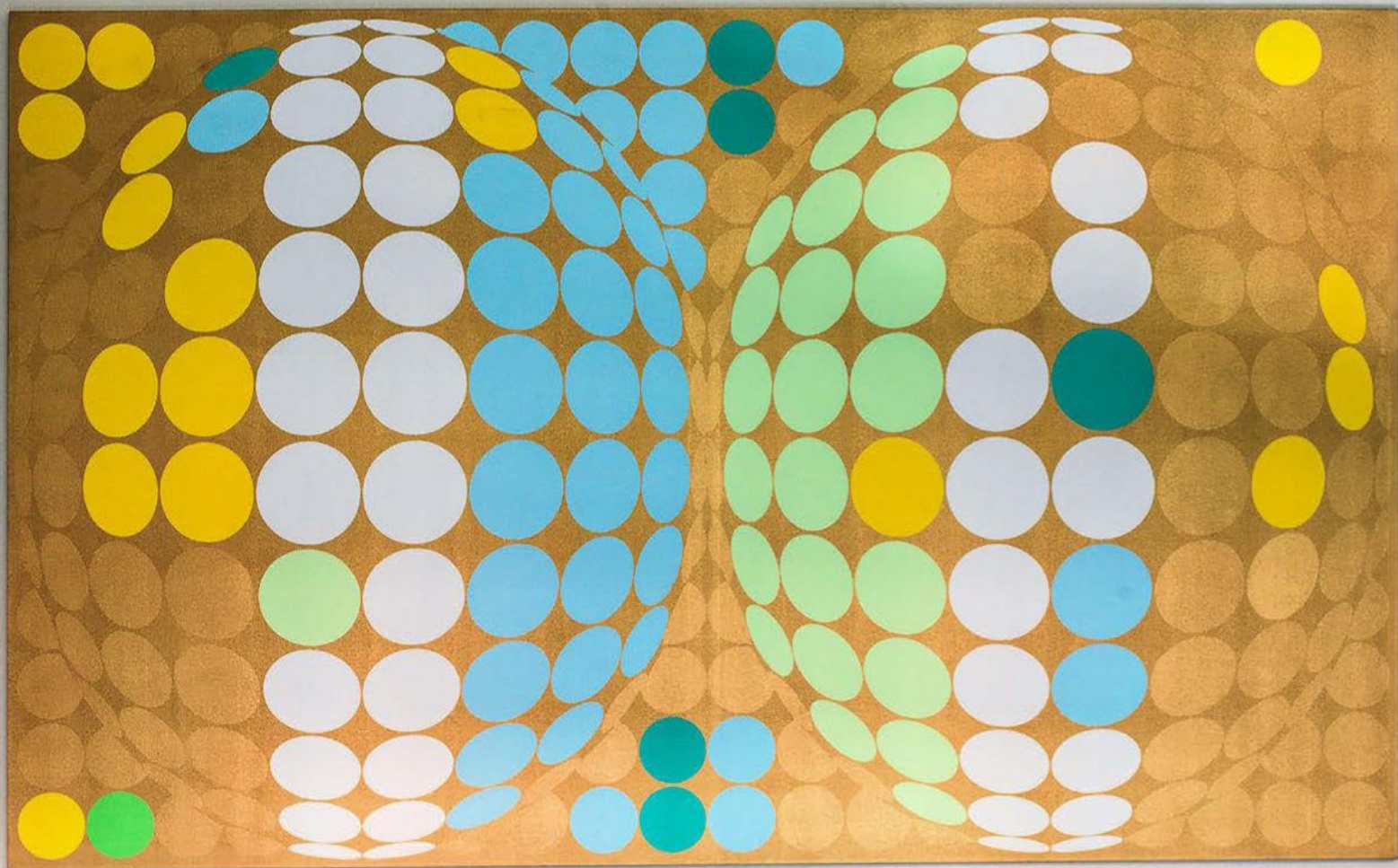
homes, which are often their showrooms, are frequently remixed, remastered or reinvented.

This is very much the case with Belgian-born interior designer Caroline Legrand. Her London apartment, which she decorated four years ago, has recently changed its spots in a very distinctive way.

It has morphed from a dark, sexy and rather moody interior to a cooler, more chic, glamorous look that uses lighter colours and striking accents of blue and gold.

"The new design and colour scheme is an evolution of my personal tastes that have been changed through my work over the past few years," explains Legrand.

"Working with various clients in different exciting cities around the world has inspired



Sylvie Fleury's brightly coloured canvas Past, Present, and Future hangs in the dining room and was the catalyst for the revamp of the apartment.

The previously chocolate-coloured walls in the sitting room were given a coat of black paint, and gold leaf was added to the latticework on the ceiling. The original 1960s sofa was reupholstered in Travertine fabric by Robert Allen and the shaggy white rug is a bespoke design by Philippe Starck.





me and also shaped my aesthetic. It gave me the impetus I needed to edit the spaces and brighten up some rooms.”

For many innovative designers, art often dictates a certain creative direction and this is very true in Legrand’s case. Rooms are often built around a trophy piece of art or striking pieces of furniture which she uses to tie the room together – a unique treatment that results in exuberant, individual spaces. In this case it was the purchase of the appropriately titled Sylvie Fleury canvas *Past, Present, and Future* which Legrand recently added to her growing art collection.

“This piece became the catalyst for the ‘remix’ of the main rooms of my apartment,” she states. “Its colours, shapes and simplicity stirred my senses and inspired me to introduce a fresh look to my home.”

Legrand paired the gold and bright colours in Fleury’s work, which hangs on one wall in the dining room, with Anish Kapoor’s *Blue Shadow* prints, which hang on another and which were previously languishing in a different part of the apartment.

With blue as the accent colour, Lucien Smith’s *STP* was inevitably the next artwork to move into the dining room, where the walls are finished in a pale cream colour to allow the vibrant hues of the art to shine.

The existing 1960s bronze ram’s head dining table, bought from Talisman, was retained and the 1970s American Charles Hollis Jones lucite-framed dining chairs were reupholstered in a white towelling fabric to add an edge to the room.

Legrand felt the sitting room needed to keep a dark, moody feel, so she covered the chocolate-coloured walls with a slick of black paint. Again artwork was instrumental in tying the new colour palette together.

“On the basis of ‘let’s see if this works’, I introduced some gold leaf in between the lattice ceiling and the result was a stroke of genius that added that extra *je ne sais quoi* to the room,” she says.

“I have observed the recent trends among French



***Above:** a vintage gold Arco lamp from Flos and an off-white Philippe Starck rug have pride of place in the family TV room.*
***Left:** a dinosaur stands guard in the hallway.*



A pair of marshmallow-coloured stools bought in Miami led to the family room being redecorated in a mix of grey, cream, black and dusty pink.

The office is an example of the chic, glamorous look Legrand has introduced into her London apartment.





Above left: art dictates a certain creative direction in the home, as shown in the office. Above right and below: rooms are often built around a trophy piece of art or a single piece of statement furniture, as the hallway shows.



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interior designers to mix contemporary influences into classical Parisian apartments and knew that it would translate well into my own place.”

The existing 1960s sofa was taken apart and reupholstered in Travertine fabric by Robert Allen to give it a new lease on life.

Legrand had been greatly impressed by a number of retrospectives she had seen of French furniture designer Pierre Paulin's work, so when it came to commissioning a round bespoke Philippe Starck shaggy white rug to hold everything together he had a healthy influence. The result is now a fresher, more elegant space that complements the cool of the adjoining dining room.

The spacious, dark hallway was repainted white and new art was moved from other rooms to join some existing large pieces to increase the gallery-like impact of the entrance.

“Visitors now ask me whether this or that piece is new when in fact it was in another room they had previously never seen,” says Legrand.

In curating her collection, the interior designer carefully juxtaposed pieces to create contradiction, so a new Jérôme Robbe artwork (varnish on a mirrored perspex) proudly resides next to Tomás Saraceno's installation Galactic Cumulus.

Following on from the hallway, a pair of marshmallow-coloured, paint-spattered stools bought in Miami were the trigger point for restyling the family TV room, which went from dark wood panels and deep-blue velvet to a variation of grey, cream, black and dusty pink.

The last piece to find its way into the room was a vintage gold Arco lamp from Flos, which Legrand had originally sourced in Miami for a client's house. “Again, I tied it all in with an off-white



Above: an Eero Saarinen tulip table and set of stools fit snugly into the kitchen. **Left:** the sitting room retains its dark walls but is brightened by a gold hand chair.

Opposite: the light kitchen features cool marble floor tiles and worktops.



Right and below: the master bedroom is created around a pair of cloud bedside tables from Miami, and the look is completed by a 1970s chair in its original fabric. Far right: the Cole & Son wallpaper mirrors Travertine stone.



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Starck rug,” she states.

The master bedroom was designed around a pair of ‘cloud’ bedside tables, again discovered in Miami.

“One of my favourite types of stone is Travertine and when I found an identical Cole & Son wallpaper I went for an all-out Travertine look on the walls, which I had been dreaming about for ages,” she explains.

The finishing touch was a 1970s chair in its original, impeccable fabric which perfectly matched the new colour palette of the room.

Legrand’s teenage son’s bedroom was also changed dramatically from a Phillip Jeffries green seagrass wallcovering to an artificial oakwood wallpaper reminiscent of a 1970s camper van, as her witty wallpaper expert mentioned in passing.

This was “exactly the vibe I wanted to create”, she says with a smile. “Again, a shaggy rug in a creamy hue was a winner.”

Legrand’s edgy remix shows how the look and feel of a home can be changed dramatically by simply revamping and moving the furniture as well as refocusing the art.

The addition of new artwork and changing the colour scheme injected new blood – and it was all achieved in a matter of four weeks.

But what of the future? “I’m sure that within the next 18 months I will get restless once more and will either move house altogether or do this all over again,” says Legrand with a laugh.

“The idea that it’s costly to regularly change and refurbish a home is not always true. It’s re-energising, empowering and enlightening – and as the saying goes ‘a change is as good as a rest.’”



Above and below: the bathroom retains a moody, monochromatic look with black walls and black and white marble tiles on the floor and bath surround. Matching black and white works of art hang on the walls.

