



A PARISIAN MASTERPIECE

Creating a work of art takes time. Judging by the magnificent results, the 10-year renovation of this *hôtel particulier* was worth the wait

PHOTOGRAPHY BY FREDERIC VASSEUR

Patience is a virtue that architect Laurent Bourgois has in abundance. It's the characteristic that has driven his 10-year renovation of a magnificent, 17th-century Parisian mansion to a triumphant conclusion.

"The property was beautifully built but very dilapidated when my client bought it," says Bourgois. "The roof was cracking, windows let in water, and the stonework was in very poor condition." Undaunted, he embarked on a major restoration including renewing all the pipework and electrics, replacing the windows, roof and internal plasterwork, and installing a lift.

The layout was also altered. Entered through a private courtyard, the first floor now contains a sitting room, library, kitchen, and office. A master bedroom, sitting room, living room, and further kitchen are located on the second and third floors, while another apartment spans the third and fourth floors. The lower ground floor comprises two studios and an apartment opening onto a landscaped courtyard. In total there are 20 rooms, 10 bedrooms, and eight full baths.

"The owner felt the property was too big so we built a duplex apartment in the original attic rooms," says Bourgois. "We created full-height rooms with a bird's-eye view of Paris by changing the slope of the roof. The atmosphere is charming. The terrace we added within the apartment's L-shape is particularly successful as it's hidden from neighboring properties.

"The owner wanted a choice of areas to live within the property," he adds. "So we built a triplex apartment over the first, second, and third floors. This is grander than the duplex and we retained, or copied, many original features." While respecting the existing dimensions, Bourgois turned one reception room into a big kitchen and another into a library. By copying the original cornicing and building classically styled bookcases, the library looks centuries old.

"Our aim was to make it look as if everything had always been here," says Bourgois. "We were very careful about materials, using old terracotta tiles in the bathroom and paints that didn't look too modern." Local craftsmen tackled specialist work such as gilding.

The internal decoration was planned in tandem with the restoration. Hugh Henry of design firm MHZ created an elegant interior that reflects the building's classic nature while adding a light, bohemian touch using the owner's diverse collection of sculpture, paintings, tapestry, and contemporary furniture.

"All I had to do was create a good shell," Bourgois says modestly. "The twist comes from the way Hugh has mixed colors, fabrics, furniture, and works of art." Patience and talent, it seems, have underpinned this challenging renovation as much as stone and plaster.

Discover more about this special property, including further photography, at www.belles-demeures-de-france.com



The elegant interior reflects the building's classic nature, with the owner's diverse collection of sculpture, paintings, tapestry, and contemporary furniture adding a light, bohemian touch.



STANDOUT FEATURE

The versatility of the living space is a rare find in a period property of this style, and its renovation to such a high standard takes the appeal of this townhouse to new heights.



“Our aim was to make it look as if everything had always been here. We were very careful about materials, using old terracotta tiles in the bathrooms and paints that didn’t look too modern.”