

A New Chapter

The clever use of wallpaper, plush fabrics and jewel tones transforms this pied-à-terre into an exquisite gem

By *Melissa Tiogg*
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This page:
London-based interior designer Nebiye Cihan

Opposite page:
The sinuous veins of the custom-made marble coffee table draw cues from the wall-hung Alabaster SF11-S2 painting by Sterling Ruby in the living room





From left: The entryway makes an indelible impression with the Namban wallpaper from De Gourmay, a Paonazzo marble console, tasseled velvet armchairs and Via Antica table lamps; The hallway features a vintage armchair and Poliedro chandeliers from Fabio Ltd

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A staple in the grand old houses of England, wallpaper has made a triumphant return in recent years and is now one of the most fashionable—and deliciously pretty—ways to update a property.

Nowhere is the result better illustrated than in this South Kensington apartment in London, crafted by interior designer Nebihe Cihan.

Owned by a Kuwaiti couple needing a pied-à-terre in central London, this abode is part of a protected 19th-century building, leaving beautiful bones for the designer to play with. The home has been in the client's family for decades, but it had not been renovated since 1972.

“I wanted to respect the history of the apartment and retain its charm,” says Cihan, who kept the crown mouldings and cornices as well as the original architraves around the doors intact. “When I first saw it, I fell in love with the original parts and wanted to keep them and merge the old with the new. My client told me she had happy memories

in this apartment, which was one of the reasons behind preserving the old elements and thus preserving her memories.”

HALLWAY OF DREAMS

Creating what must be one of the most striking entrances in west London, Cihan has covered the hallway in the Namban walkcovering from British wallpaper brand De Gourmay, which is textured and designed to entice visitors indoors.

“When I was growing up in Turkey, our home had a really long hallway, and as a child, I have always had an affinity for them,” says Cihan, who now lives in London. “The De Gourmay Namban wallpaper was the ideal addition, as it has a three-dimensional texture which adds depth to the space.”

A custom console in Italian Paonazzo marble also takes pride of place here. “The idea was to keep the design feminine, therefore I used curvy lines and rounded



edges for the furniture," she explains. "My biggest passion is to go marble shopping in Italy; I always handpick every slab."

AROUND THE WORLD

Although the client has homes all over the globe, she retains a real affinity for Paris. In the sitting room, she wanted a reminder of the city—a desire realised through the use of French doors, wrought iron balconies and the view of the leafy streets. "My interpretation of Parisian chic is sophisticated, intimate and elegant; an aesthetic that is rich in both texture and colour," says Cihan. "The Parisian influence comes into play with the upholstery fabrics, in particular, as I used French brands Nobilis and Pierre Frey throughout."

Italian influences also permeate the flat. The majority of the furniture was purchased from Italian brands Minotti and Baxter, and the woodwork

and marble flooring were crafted in a factory in Bergamo, Italy. In terms of the colour palette, Cihan wanted to bring warmth into the living room to counteract the ubiquitous grey skies of London—hence the use of gold on the walls and a green velvet sofa.

The art collection in this home also adds depth: it was selected by London-based curator Lawrence Van Hagen of LVH Art. "The U-shaped sculpture, *Big U* by Claudia Comte, broke the norm," says the designer. "Every space needs a sculpture, especially spaces with high ceilings, to add elevation."

The dining room is incorporated into the living space, with the table designed by Cihan's studio and chairs from Minotti. "I like the modern look of Minotti furniture, because it has a timeless elegance and is functional in terms of comfort, which is always pivotal for me," she explains. "There is no point designing beautiful interiors if they aren't functional."

This page: The living room features the Alexander sofa and Aston lounge chair from Minotti
Opposite page: The dining area is decorated with the Aston chairs and sofa from Minotti and a custom-made table in Nero Marquina marble, and the Poliedri chandelier from Fabio Ltd





CALM AND COLLECTED

This flat is being used by the family as a holiday home in London, so Cihan didn't want to personalise the bedrooms too much, although she still needed to make them pretty. That was achieved with the De Gournay wallpaper in the wisteria print in the master bedroom. The colour is gently picked up by a Murano glass table lamp from Via Antica.

"We wanted to adopt a more muted colour scheme in the bedrooms," says Cihan. "Grey and taupe dominate with a touch of colour in the form of the cheerful wallpaper, as well as the purple vintage table lamps I collected from a vintage store in Brussels."

And the client's reaction? Struck silent, in the happiest way possible—it took her a while to take in this painted jewel of an apartment, the very same flat that had been in her family for years.



Clockwise from left: The dreamy Wisteria wallpaper from De Gournay adds an enchanting touch to the master bedroom; The guest room features headboards upholstered in Dedar Milano fabric, as well as a custom-made night stand, a chandelier and wall lights from Valérie Wade Furniture; The lounge area in the master bedroom is furnished with the Leslie sofa and Rays coffee table from Minotti, a vintage mirror from Valérie Wade Furniture, and a Via Antica table lamp; The minimalist bathroom is luxuriously clad in Bianco Carrara marble