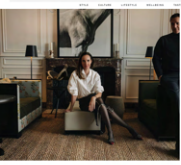

French connection: Inside the majestic Parisian townhouse of designers Gilles and Boissier

BY ANNA LOCKE | PUBLISHED 10 MARCH 2022 | 10 MIN READ

PATRICK GILLES AND GUENTHER BOISSIER, THE FOUNDERS OF CERES, ALMOST NEVER STOPPED TO LET ANYONE IN. THEY TRANSFORMED THEIR 19TH-CENTURY HOME INTO A LIVING WORK OF ART

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Inspired by French tradition and a deeply rooted passion for all things interiors, Patrick Gilles and Guenther Boissier are the partners, in life and business, behind renowned design studio Gilles & Boissier. Having first met while working at the late French designer and architect Christian Liaigre's studio, they set up on their own in 2004 and have been making waves ever since.

Having made a name for themselves internationally by designing a slew of Mayfair boutiques worldwide, the Bacs-Lez-Pont by **New York** luxury menswear duo Hiltbrand and Munro Bonbid, as well as their own exceptional residence, Hôtel Particulier Monceau, Gilles & Boissier are setting a new standard when it comes to authentic design and chic, understated luxury.

"I was immediately struck by Patrick's unique approach to design," says Boissier. "Having worked together for many years at Christian Liaigre, where Lionel Philippe Narrè's team, but we always referred to as Gilles-allès. "Our combined experiences eventually led us to create our own firm, where we blended our skills and vision."

With a signature aesthetic grounded in French design traditions, the duo is also blending classic styles with modern flourishes, weaving them in with "a touch of the unexpected". Gilles adds: "We have a very rich history and the authenticity of architectural codes," says Boissier. "We aim to express the art de vivre of France in spaces that feel artistic and globally appealing."

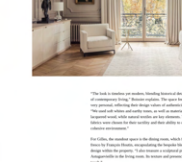
While Gilles tends to focus on materiality, pure lines, structure, and proportions, Boissier is more drawn to the "soul" of a project. However, they create spaces that are visually compelling, drawing on one another's different strengths and independent expertise to achieve visual harmony. "We work collaboratively on every project, but our individual strengths complement each other perfectly," says Boissier.

Gilles points to the duo's work for Moncler as a case in point. Handed a brief to communicate both luxury and contemporary design, the first boutique designed by the duo opened in 2005 on Rue du Faubourg Saint-Honoré. It was here that they introduced the "Monaluxe" concept, using rustic wood panelling, dark stone, and black metal accents to create a warm yet sophisticated environment.

"It was crucial to reflect Moncler's heritage, rooted in alpine performance and craftsmanship, while simultaneously embracing cutting-edge materials and contemporary design," says Gilles. "We wanted to create a space that seamlessly blended Moncler's technical expertise with an urban aesthetic, ensuring that each boutique, from Paris to Tokyo, embodies the brand's DNA while reflecting the culture and character of its location."

"The stores are not just retail spaces: they are theatrical environments where lighting sculpts the space, and every staircase, material, and texture contributes to a sensory journey," adds Boissier. "To us, a truly iconic design engages with its surroundings and evokes emotion while remaining functional and adaptable to evolving trends."

With their latest project, Hôtel Particulier Monceau, the duo have turned their hand to transforming and restoring their 19th-century mansion near Parc Monceau in Paris. The couple first discovered the historic home in 2017 via a Sotheby's auction and instantly saw its potential. Mixing fascinating history with timeless design, the result is a modern sanctuary that honours period craftsmanship while integrating contemporary creative comforts.



"The look is timeless yet modern, blending historical details with the luxuries of contemporary living," Boissier explains. The space feels comfortable and very personal, reflecting their design values of authenticity and simplicity. "We used soft whites and earthy tones, as well as materials like marble and lacquered wood, while natural textiles are key elements. The textures and fabrics were chosen for their tactility and their ability to create a calming, cohesive environment."

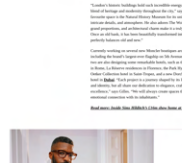
For Gilles, the standout space is the dining room, which features a beautiful fresco by François Boutin, encapsulating the bespoke blend of art, history, and design within the property. "I also treasure a sculptural piece by Christian Astuguevieille in the living room. Its texture and presence are still a unique touch."

A thorough renovation uncovered a range of hidden architectural details, such as mouldings, original plasterwork, and intricate wood panelling, all of which the pair wanted to celebrate by restoring the property's original grandeur. "Our home is a true reflection of our belief in balancing heritage with modernity, craftsmanship with comfort," says Boissier.

"This project was personal, so it allowed us to explore design without boundaries," adds Gilles. "We're proud to have created a space that truly expresses ourselves, resulting in something intimate and deeply expressive." It was also vital that the property be fit for modern family life, which meant rearranging the functionality of the rooms.

As we move onto design trends, I ask the couple what niche they abide by – if any. "Design has principles, but we don't follow strict rules," says Boissier. "It's important to understand the guidelines, but we prefer to bend them and push boundaries creatively to make spaces feel fresh and unique."

While they're not particularly interested in the interior design trends of the day, they're excited by the recent resurgence of artisanal craftsmanship and the growing emphasis on using beautiful materials. "People are seeking authenticity and a deeper connection to the spaces they inhabit," says Boissier. "Lately, we've been inspired by the Wabi-Sabi philosophy, specifically the beauty of imperfection and materiality," Gilles adds.



When it comes to other designers and artists they admire, Boissier is keen on Mathieu Naft, an artist and designer she admires for his unique approach and ability to transform boundaries between disciplines. "He's a big fan of Japanese culture, and his work reflects a deep respect for craftsmanship, the balances colour and form," for Gilles, it's the work of Jean Prouvé, stating in his home, it could be a piece by Hiroshi Sugimoto. "His work has a meditative quality that resonates with our philosophy of timelessness."

While the two are based in Paris, their work takes them all over the world, travelling between cities, overseeing projects and drawing inspiration from different cultures. They visit London regularly, whether for work or simply to "immerse themselves" in its incredible design and architectural heritage.

"London's historic buildings, with each incredible stamp, there is a wonderful blend of heritage and modernity throughout the city," says Gilles, whose favourite space is the Natural History Museum for its unique architecture, intricate details, and atmosphere. He also adores The Wolseley. "Its history, grand proportions, and architectural charm make it a truly exceptional space. Once an old bank, it has been beautifully transformed into a restaurant that perfectly balances old and new."

Currently working on several new Moncler boutiques around the world, including the brand's largest-ever flagship on 5th Avenue in New York, the two are also designing some remarkable hotels, such as the Mandarin Oriental Paris, which is set to open its doors in early 2025, as well as the Peninsula on Ombu Collection hotel in Saint-Tropez, and a new Dorchester Collection hotel in **Dubai**. "Each project is a journey shaped by its local context, history, and identity, but all share our dedication to elegance, craftsmanship, and excellence," says Gilles. "We will always create spaces that foster an emotional connection with its inhabitants."

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