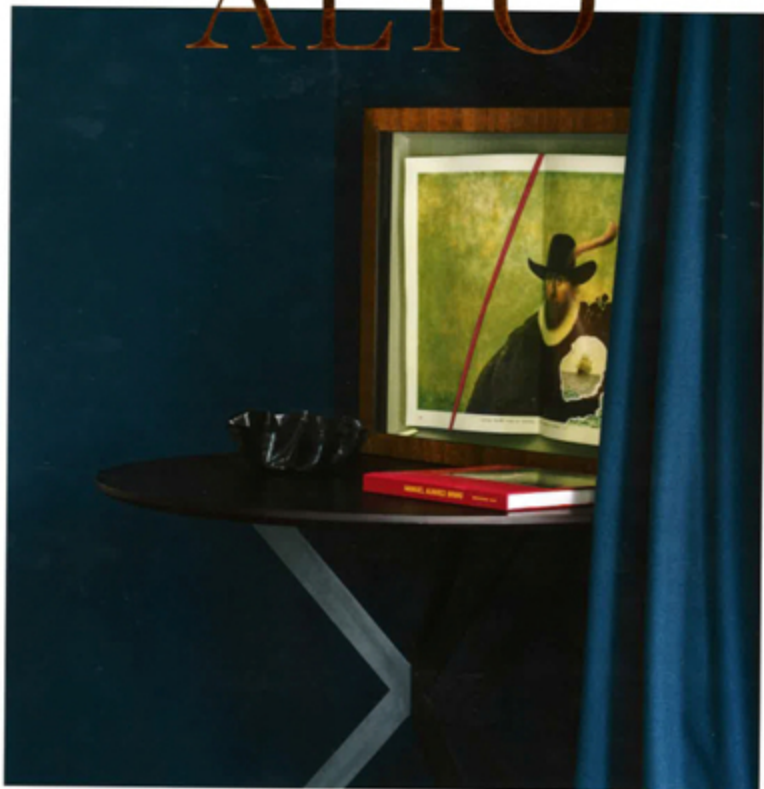


DESIGN FOR LIVING

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# A CASUALLY CHIC APARTMENT

LISBON

BUILT IN THE 18TH CENTURY, THIS CITY-CENTRE FLAT IN THE PORTUGUESE CAPITAL HAS BEEN FRESHLY MADE-OVER BY DESIGNER CRISTINA JORGE DE CARVALHO, FOR A CLIENT WHO THRIVES ON MIXING IT UP / *By Helen Parton*

PHOTOGRAPHY BY FRANCISCO DE ALMEIDA DIAS



FROM A FILM: Everything about her was of the same exasperating  
strength of her shapely legs, the dirty sole of her  
sweater she wore despite the closeness of the room,  
small and especially the dead end of her face with its strange  
made-up lips.

With space at a premium in Lisbon, designer Cristina Jorge de Carvalho has been generous with the living and dining space, since her fashion-industry client likes to entertain

'Eclectic' is an overused word in interiors. But when there's an African mask, a Moroccan Berber rug, a vintage armchair, a Vico Magistretti floor lamp and a Seventies-inspired mirrored table contained in the sitting room alone of this bijoux Lisbon apartment, one feels that here, the space deserves the description.

The work of interior designer Cristina Jorge de Carvalho, this first-floor property is home to a businesswoman who works in fashion, and who has fabulousness in spades – from the size of her walk-in wardrobe to the proliferation of global finds. "Cristina had already done my previous house, so I gave her total freedom as I love her taste and have complete confidence in her work," the owner says. She came to live in the apartment

following a divorce, so in a way this is a fresh start, but there is some continuity, thanks to Jorge de Carvalho's skills.

Having been given carte blanche, Jorge de Carvalho's starting point for inspiration was the apartment's Pombaline architecture. The style emerged after the 1755 earthquake that destroyed much of the Portuguese capital and is named after Sebastião José de Carvalho e Melo, first Marquis of Pombal, who was instrumental in the city's reconstruction.

Previously a medieval city with narrow streets, Pombal transformed Lisbon into a grid system, with wide roads and pavements. The building's structure was an early version of prefabrication, its elements manufactured outside the city and then transported in and assembled >

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*The oval table may be vintage in spirit, but was designed by Jorge de Carvalho herself; it's surrounded by mismatched chairs, including two Fifties armchairs reupholstered in Manuel Canovas' 'Bengale' toile*





*The living room features personal trinkets, contemporary art and lots of soft furnishings. Normally hidden, the timber frame is an anti-scientific feature common to houses of the period*

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on site. The atypical flexible structure of Pombaline style can clearly be seen in the exposed wooden frame to one side of the apartment's living room. Normally concealed, it's also used on floors and roofs and gives buildings greater protection from seismic movements: the frame shakes, but it does not fall down.

After working around this rather functional building type, the main consideration was, naturally, the owner herself. Jorge de Carvalho points out that "she's very feminine and a little bit classic - more classic than I am - so I took that into account. She loves a mix of pieces, style, colours and materials." And so we have the bold chevrons of the living room sofa cushions tempered by natural linen curtains and a handful of aforementioned

objets trouvés. Dominating one wall is a work of art featuring a quote from the Vladimir Nabokov novel *Lolita*; the off-white shade in which the letters are written is the same as one of the sofas. Jorge de Carvalho describes a similar cohesion in the dining room where the soft beige complements the blue of the artwork. Far from being an afterthought, the art in this project is clearly an intrinsic part of the colour scheme from the get-go.

Both the *Lolita* piece and the work in the dining room are by João Louro, an artist known to Jorge de Carvalho. Apart from being an avid art collector, the apartment owner's home expresses her other interests, too, including entertaining. "She loves to receive guests," says Jorge de Carvalho. "The table, from my latest

collection launching at Maison et Objet in Singapore this year, is oval - because that's nicer for a group of people to sit around." Vintage 'Eames DSW' chairs, two Fifties armchairs covered in printed fabric by Manuel Canovas, and a Sixties pendant light suspended above the table complete the look here. The effect in the dining room, as per the rest of the apartment, is a relaxed, effortless luxury rather than a scheme that's been stiffly completed with designer piece after designer piece.

Cooking, on the other hand, is not so much of a priority for the owner, hence the compactness and simplicity of the kitchen, with its bespoke units and shelving realised in black lacquer. There are a few concessions to ornamentation, however: a Japanese silver tea set, which dates from >

*The glamorous black kitchen makes the best use of a small space with open shelving and ceiling-high cabinets*



*A soothing spa-like bathroom has been created by layering up neutral colours and natural materials*





the beginning of the 20th century and an exquisite antique crystal chandelier.

Lighting is not just for decorative purposes, says Jorge de Carvalho. "You can have a different mood or ambience, whether you're having a party or watching a movie. I pay a lot of attention to it."

The master bedroom appeals to the owner's more romantic side, from the furniture to the flower-patterned pillows. There is a vintage table lamp to one side of the bed and another designed by Jorge de Carvalho herself on the other, giving a homely asymmetry to a rather grand space. The Louis XV-style bed is another of the designer's own creations. Along with the mirrored table in the living room, it is one of the few pieces to have survived the move from the owner's previous residence.

While the bathroom remains largely untouched, the walk-in wardrobe is a brand-new addition, converted from what was a second bedroom. Jorge de Carvalho explains that the owner "has an impressive collection of clothes, so we had to optimise the space as much as possible. That's why you have two levels of clothes rails: it makes the most of the high ceilings, and along the bottom you have all the drawers."

Room for entertaining friends, enough space for a designer wardrobe and a burgeoning collection of unusual art – what's not to love? As the owner sums up: "It's exactly what I had in mind, but it's also timeless, so I know I'll still be happy here in 10 years."

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*"THE EFFECT IS A RELAXED, EFFORTLESS LUXURY RATHER THAN A SCHEME THAT'S BEEN STIFFLY COMPLETED WITH DESIGNER PIECES"*

*The bed was one of the few pieces to come from the owner's previous home; its grandeur is tempered by the mismatched bedside tables and lamps*

