



Fun HOUSE

A triplex full of eclecticism and humour, in the city of Reims, France, shows how graphic art, recycled furniture and diverted objects can mingle for a refreshing home style.

WORDS, PHOTOGRAPHY, STYLING Anne-Catherine Seoffoni

01 Three old Vespas from the 50s are displayed below the stairs to the office. The metal staircase owes its apparent lightness to a slit hidden in the wall to which the steps have been welded, and to a stake hidden by the amazing pile of comic books.



A French couple sought assistance from Catalan designer Carlos Pujol in creating their own contemporary couple's haven, which would reflect a lifestyle without children, and transform a dull, dark dwelling into an airy and luminous apartment.

The nine-month project saw the conversion of four small studios into 250sqm of open spaces and bright living areas, creating a trendy residence that perfectly reflected the personalities of the fortysomething owners. Carlos focused on bringing an outside feel to the house by creating a 50sqm external terrace.

The first stage was bringing four studios together and raising the dwelling's roof, allowing light to flood into the triplex.

The open-plan kitchen and living area resulted from the redistribution of the space. An old staircase has been integrated to lead into the other levels, which themselves have been enlarged. "The bedrooms and bathrooms are situated on the first floor while the living areas are on the second floor, mainly to maximise natural light," says Carlos.

The building was raised up from 2.3m, and a mezzanine was built on a structural wooden frame that was brought in by

a 60m-high external crane. On the wall, a line indicates the location of the initial roof.

In the second stage – the decoration – Carlos let his imagination run free to set the interior design style. "I oversaw everything, from the design of the furniture to the infusion of the style," he says.

An ideas man, Carlos says that he drew from his childhood memories and his penchant for graphic art, the Beatles, recycled furniture, and objects diverted from their first utility.

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“In the triplex, eclecticism is in all materials, colours, styles and periods. Vintage and contemporary mix perfectly in this atmosphere.”

03 Behind the bed, a wall of stones and bricks is a reminder of the two successive stages of construction.

A tall, stainless steel Sub-Zero refrigerator stands against a dark, textured background. The refrigerator has a glass door on the right side, revealing shelves stocked with various food items like fruits, vegetables, and jars. Below the main compartment are two drawers with horizontal handles. The floor is dark and reflective, showing a faint reflection of the refrigerator and a single diamond lying on the right side.

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“We wanted to create an unusual and quirky space, so I spent a lot of time with the owners and I discovered that we shared a number of cultural references. In the triplex, eclecticism is in all materials, colours, styles and periods. Vintage and contemporary mix perfectly in this atmosphere,” explains Carlos.

Carlos responded to the specific architecture of the space in designing custom furniture. “Some items were tailor-made for this apartment, for example the big table in the kitchen and the industrial staircase in the living room whose steps seem to float in the air,” he says.

In the living room, Carlos has covered a sofa from Cinna with metallic plastic

sheeting. He also chose unique armchairs from Qui est Paul?, burnt, melted and customised by the artist S.L Moon.

“Recycling offers materials a second life, often more beautiful than the first,” says Carlos, and his love of upcycling is clear in unique items like the chandelier in the lounge. It is constructed from pairs of glasses from Emmaüs, which provide beautiful lighting effects on the ceiling.

The spirit of recycling has also guided the design of the kitchen, where alimentary glass jars serve as ceiling lamps, and old pine panelling has been stripped, painted and used to cover IKEA storage units, decorated with random buttons to add a touch of humour.

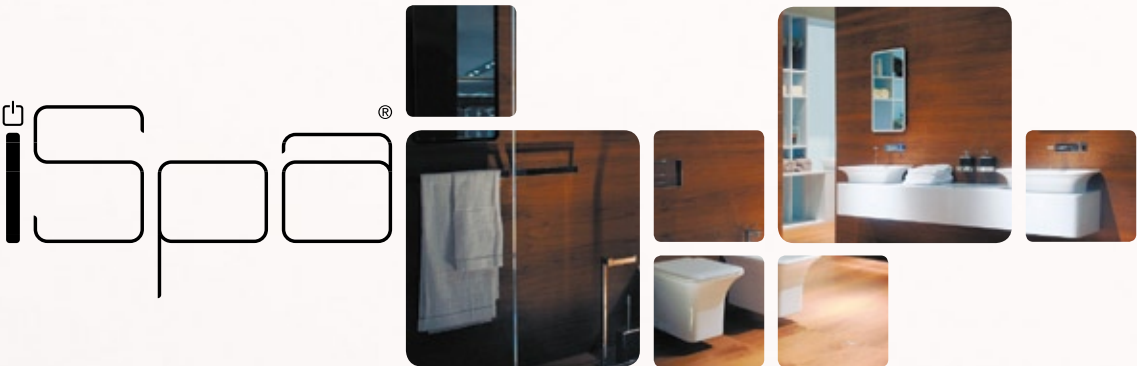


04 Up to the second floor, the stairs display the colours of the RAL chart. First, the stairs were painted, then the RAL references were applied using digital printing on adhesive.



05 The mezzanine also accommodates an office, with a half-glass floor. The giant Superman sticker was created by scanning a comic book and printing the image on a digital adhesive.

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06

Two huge dining tables on wheels were made from sanded and varnished wooden flooring, mounted on a rimmed metal frame. On the floor, two different varieties of cement tiles were chosen to give the illusion of separation between the two areas.

The terrace offers an outside living area where the couple can relax or entertain friends. Akin to a garden, it has plants, a hammock, an external shower, bean bags and a barbecue, and offers a green retreat in the heart of the city. A half-glass floor lets light in to the living room below.

While he's unwilling to be labelled too readily, Carlos's approach in this triplex could be called 'rock'n'roll architecture'. "There is nothing worse than being locked into one's style," he says. "You have to reinvent yourself constantly. The worst compliment you can give me? That you detected in a project my 'touch', my style."

07



DESIGN FILE

Carlos Pujol talks about the quirky design for this couple's retreat.

What was the most challenging part of the renovation? Raising the building for the mezzanine. It took two months to get all the necessary authorisations, and there were many delays due to the difficulty of the project.
Is there something you consider the highlight of the design? The touches of bright colours, the comic heroes, the Vespas, the pin-up girls in the toilet... the nod to the graphic arts is undoubtedly the highlight of the apartment's identity. Every room has its share of surprises.
How would you describe the finished project? Whimsical, funny and refreshing.

STOCKISTS Carlos Pujol (designer) carlos.fr Cinna (sofa) cinna.fr Duravit (bathroom fittings) duravit.com.au Emmaüs (chandelier glasses) emmaus-international.org IKEA (kitchen storage units) ikea.com.au Qui est Paul? (armchairs) qui-est-paul.com RAL (stair display chart) ralcolor.com.

06 Old copies of *Paris Match* magazine in black and white have been used to cover the walls.

07 As in the rest of the flat, much of the office furniture was custom-made by Carlos, including the office desk shaped like a plane wing.



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