

ELLE DECOR

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the holiday issue



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ROMANTIC BEDROOMS



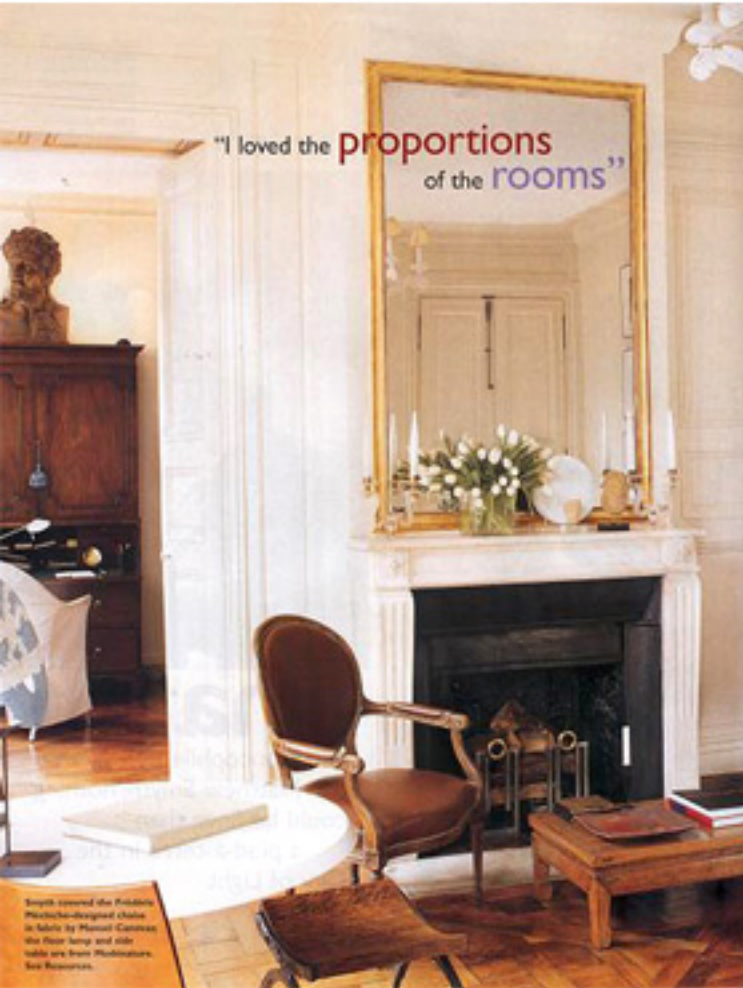
paris match

For Francophile

Matthew Smyth, nothing
could be finer than
a pied-à-terre in the
City of Light



"I loved the proportions
of the rooms"



Styish topped the Poltrona
Prestidipinto chair
in fabric by Manuel Cantón.
The floor lamp and side
table are from Modigliani.
See Resources.



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For a compulsive collector of beautiful things, Paris's top
accommodations could not be more inspiring. The
Manhattan-based interior designer Matthew Smyth was
looking for the ultimate find, a Parisian pied-à-terre, to
store his books and end up in this 16th-century, when antique
stores are the stuff of urban legend. "It's the first apartment
I looked at," Smyth says of the flat, on the third floor of a building
rumored to have once been home to Voltaire. "I loved the
proportions of the rooms."

It's a long way to go for long weekends (Smyth intends to do
so every five weeks), but spend time in this apartment, and it
hard to stay away. With Versailles-paneled paragon floor-
to-ceiling paneling, a marble mantel, wrought-iron wine
rack, and chandelier, organic light, the 17th-century
rooms were enchanting even in the sun. Still, Smyth wanted
more. His soft-spoken demeanor belies the steady dedication
of a man devoted to his work, and heralding the place
renewed with near-military determination: call it a decorating
fête. After a 24-hour shopping spree (including a stop at the
B&P department store for a deep sofa that Smyth reupholstered
and accented with silk-shagreen pillows), the place was



"It was **empty** on a Wednesday. On Friday, we had a **party**"

"It gets done." I was determined not to have every trip be focused on filling up the apartment with more things," he says. "It was empty on a Wednesday. On Friday, the delivery truck showed up, and we had a cocktail party that night."

Despite Smith's proximity to the world's best antiquaries and most venerable museums (the Louvre and Musee d'Orsay are easy walks), the apartment is notable for its well-chosen examples of contemporary design, with an accent on Philippe Starck, who's represented by a steel bookcase, plastic table, and white slip-covered desk chair. "I design furniture myself, and I have no problem using other people's work," Starck says.

Of course, style happens when modern pieces mix beautifully with furnishings of earlier vintage. A Frederic Mielche chair covered in jutey green and purple stripes and a Louis XVI leather armchair are separated by a few feet and a small

Chinese table picked up at the Gliganovici flea market; the round supports a pair of 1950s Plexiglas candlesticks, a handsome counterpart to the midcentury Smith design in the style of Frank Lloyd Wright. The bedroom's sleeping alcove features built-in wardrobes on either side, so Smith kept things simple, painting his bed against a felt Foucault shade of blue-green, pushing his feet against two storage cabinets from Habitat, and hanging a flea-market mirror, the only gilt-framed glass that didn't come with the place.

The best of Habitat in the bedroom, however, is a dyed-up scene from the streamlined aesthetic. While his better half, Penelope, solemnly watches over the garden at Smith's New York country retreat, the smiling sides of Taylor symbolize the performance designer's work ethic. "He's a comedian," Smith says, "not to get too serious." ■

This page: A bedside by Philippe Starck. Facing page: An early-19th-century English armchair in the master bedroom; the bedding is by Nancy Kellix at Home. See Resources.

